

HISTORY OF FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA:

WAR YEARS, 1940 - 1945

A Thesis

by

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Abstract
of
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Statement of Problem

This thesis will develop the history of Fairfield, California from 1940 to 1945. It will examine the impact upon the community of Fairfield caused by the influx of military people of various ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds. The thesis will show that modern Fairfield is a community whose social and economic growth was an offspring of the military-industrial complex which began during World War II.

Sources of Data

Data was obtained by examining back issues of local newspapers, reviewing both primary and secondary sources, which included reports on city council meetings, church records, tax and city assessment records, census data, and personal interviews with local senior citizens with background knowledge about the city of Fairfield. In addition, the resources at the Federal Archives and Records Center at San Bruno, the Solano County Library, The California State Library, The Base Library at Travis Air Force Base, and the California State University Library at Sacramento were extensively used.

Conclusions Reached

The foundation for developing Fairfield, California into a modern metropolitan urban community began during World War II. The catalyst that stimulated the economy of the area was the building of a large military air base in the city's back yard. This military installation meant that the future of Fairfield would be tied to continued funding from the Federal Government. The economic base of the community in a few short years shifted from a service center for the surrounding agricultural areas to a dependency on a military installation. Where once community concerns centered on local sources of wealth, Fairfield's prosperity after the war became involved in national and international events.

Committee Chair's Signature of Approval

Ernest Gaudin

PREFACE

Fairfield in 1982 is a city with a population of over 60,000 people and is continually growing and developing. Some call Fairfield the ideal bedroom community of northern California. This is because one can live in Fairfield and commute to work (within one hour) via Interstate Highway 80 to either San Francisco and the Bay Area or to the capitol city of Sacramento. Not only are some residents of these metropolitan areas moving to Fairfield to live, but many large industrial companies and businesses (Anheuser Busch, Michelin Tire Corporation, Ball Metal Company, Owens-Illinois, Racal Vadic electronics firm, the new Solano Mall shopping center plus many others) have relocated in Fairfield.

Fairfield is the city that built the Solano Mall, the largest and most modern shopping center in Solano County. The city is also planning a new Gateway Town Center adjacent to the Solano Mall. This development and growth have made Fairfield a modern American city and one of the fastest growing cities in northern California. It has become a great place to live and work. To insure that this growth and development were properly planned, the city established the Redevelopment Agency to oversee the development of areas that would improve the appearance of the city and at the same time make it more liveable. The

Solano Mall, the Gateway Town Center, and the Highway 12 bypass are results of some of the Redevelopment Agency's work. In addition, there was no tax increase for the property owners in these redeveloped areas. To obtain funds, the Redevelopment Agency sold bonds to finance these public improvements. The agency also encouraged private industry and business to relocate in Fairfield.

Coming to Fairfield in 1970 as a member of the United States Air Force and after retiring from Travis Air Force Base in 1975, my wife and I decided to make Fairfield our permanent place of residence. Though we are both native Tennesseans, we found much about Fairfield and California that we liked, such as the mild climate, the warm days and the cool nights, the mountains and snow country, and the city's close proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area and the capitol city of Sacramento. In addition, we liked the many fine schools in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District and the variety of higher educational institutions (Solano College, California State University at Sacramento and Sonoma, University of California at Berkeley and Davis, etc.) available within an hour's driving time from Fairfield. In sports, the professional sport franchises in the San Francisco Bay Area gave us year round entertainment. The major teams located there were the Oakland A's and San Francisco Giants in baseball, Oakland Raiders and San Francisco Forty Niners in football, and the Golden State Warriors in basketball.

Fairfield is a city without noticeable ghetto and slum areas. It is an integrated city for living and finding available housing for all ethnic and religious groups. This is based upon my being a military retiree who lived and experienced racism in nearly all of the major sections of this country. Throughout Fairfield in 1982 one can find a mixture of many races and nationalities in almost every community. How did this happen to a city which in 1940 had a population of only 1312 people and was a lonely agricultural community with little or no industry? This thesis will furnish some of the answers.

This thesis will trace the history of Fairfield through the war years from 1940 to 1945. This period was chosen since it was during this time that major changes took place in Fairfield that laid the foundation for growth and development that is still taking roots in the 1980s. It was during this war period that Travis Air Force Base was established as the Fairfield Suisun Army Air Base and resulted in many new citizens coming to Fairfield to live and work. It was a period that found the military, industry and local political leaders working together in planning and finding a solution to accommodate this new influx of citizens and changes.

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I want to thank a number of people for their help in research and suggestions for this thesis, particularly Professor Robert Reinders, Professor Ernest Isaacs, and my wife for her willingness to proof read and correct the manuscript as I was writing the thesis and pursuing other courses. I am grateful to the librarians at Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield-Suisun Library, California State Library, California State University Library, Sacramento, and the National Archive at San Bruno, California, for allowing me to consult their files. I want to also thank all of those kind and dedicated senior citizens who gave me valuable data during their personal interviews.

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CHAPTER I

THE FAIRFIELD AREA BEFORE 1940

Fairfield is the county seat of Solano County, and boasts a beautiful court house, a county hospital and county library building. It is in the heart of the great orchard district, and its principal industries are fruit, cattle, sheep, grain and dairying. Fairfield has a deep water channel to San Francisco, and is on the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Its population is under 1400, with three churches and three schools, and 92 retail outlets. Solano Republican, November 5, 1940.

What is historical about a place like Fairfield, California? Who are the people that first lived in this area? What was the community of Fairfield like before 1940? These are some questions with which this chapter will deal.

Fairfield is geographically located at latitude 38 degrees and 16 minutes north and longitude 121 degrees and 56 minutes west in Solano County, California. The city enjoys a pleasant climate which is free from the extremes of heat and cold. The average yearly high temperature is 70.8 degrees and the average yearly low temperature is 48.8 degrees. Average rainfall is about 23 inches. The area is blessed with a prevailing sea breeze which cools the air during the summer and sweeps away the smog and fog during the winter. The clear air, prevailing winds, and good visibility made the Fairfield area the ideal site for the location of the Fairfield Suisun Army Air Base which

was later named Travis Air Force Base.¹

Fairfield is a community whose modern social and economic growth is an offspring of the military-industrial complex. This is because Travis Air Force Base, located within the city limits of Fairfield, is the headquarters of the Twenty Second Air Force, which is one of two combat-ready strategic airlift arms of the Military Airlift Command (MAC). Originated from Travis AFB are MAC airlift operations for over half the world. The base has a geographical area of responsibility that extends from the Mississippi River westward to the eastern borders of India, and from the North to the South Pole.²

In the century before the establishment of Travis Air Force Base, roaming this fair and fertile domain were the Patwin Indians of the Wintum Cultural group. They were basically hunters and gatherers. They hunted for deer, bear, elk, rabbits, and small rodents that were readily available in the Fairfield-Suisun Valley. They gathered seeds from trees like the digger pine and buckeye. The acorn was also a staple food for the Patwin. The Patwin lived off the land and located their villages along the valley floors or near the foothills. They did not develop a crop system of their own, because the land, vegetation, and animal life in the Fairfield-Suisun Valley dictated their lifestyle. It was an ideal location.³

According to R. F. Heizer and M. A. Whipple, in their book The California Indians, the western portion of

the Sacramento Valley and the tule marshes bordering the river were occupied by the Southern Patwin Indians. They settled along the northern shore of the San Pablo Bay and as far west as the hills that divide the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. The knoll sites near the Sacramento River provided an excellent area for the Indians to fish and hunt for ducks and geese in the winter time. In the summer, they would leave these sites for the dry hill slopes where there was plenty of acorns and seeds.⁴

The Patwin's first encounter with the white man came in the form of violence. Alferez Moraga was the preeminent Indian fighter of the time. He was sent by the Spanish government to punish the non-Christian Indians that lived near the Strait of Carquinez in the region now called the Fairfield-Suisun area. The Spanish wanted to punish the Patwins because they were interfering with those Indians who had been converted to Christianity. The Patwins were accused by the Spanish of killing sixteen Christian Indians who were loyal to and supported the Spanish mission at San Francisco. Moraga and his men crossed the Carquinez Strait in a boat and attacked about one hundred and twenty Patwin Indians near Suisun. They captured eighteen wounded Indians and released them immediately since they would soon die of their wounds. The survivors retreated to their huts, where they again engaged in a fight with Moraga's men. This time four Spanish soldiers were wounded. In retaliation, Moraga's

men killed the occupants of two of the three huts; but when the third hut was set on fire with the intention of driving out the occupants, the Indians bravely preferred to perish in the flames rather than surrender.⁵

The establishment in 1923 of the Spanish Mission at Sonoma, which was named "Mission San Francisco de Sonoma", was another major intrusion by the white man into the land of the Patwin. This Spanish mission was the last foothold of the Spanish conquest. On November 7, 1936, California was proclaimed "a free and sovereign State under the Mexican Government." Juan Bautista Alvarado was the provisional governor, and General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo became the military commander of the northern frontier of California. General Vallejo's headquarters was at the Sonoma Mission. The northern frontier under his command included a vast land area (now Solano, Sonoma, Napa, Yolo, Lake, Mendocino, and Sacramento counties) and made him a powerful land baron.⁶

The raising of the flag in the Plaza at Sonoma in 1846, during the Bear Flag revolt, changed the citizenship of the Mexican citizens in California, including those living in the Fairfield-Suisun Valley. General Vallejo was one of those affected by the change. However, it was easy for him to make the transition since he had been at odds with his own government before the revolt. General Vallejo also kept the Indians in the area under control by following a wise policy of handling the Indians with a fairness that made the most distant tribes his

friends. The Chief of the Patwin's Suisun tribe, Chief Sem Yeto (afterwards given the Christian name Francisco Solano), was the one who kept the Indians peaceful and under control for General Vallejo. Chief Solano and General Vallejo were close friends, and it was this relationship that proved to be an asset since their friendship prevented many Indian clashes.⁷

The boundaries of Solano County were set February 18, 1850, by the first elected legislature of the territory of California. General Vallejo, as a respected member of the California Legislature, named the county after his friend Chief Solano. It became the twenty first county in the State of California.⁸

Solano County is an area of five hundred and eighty-three thousand acres and fronts three great waterways, the San Pablo and Suisun Bays, and the Sacramento River. The other boundaries are Napa County and its hill range on the west, Yolo County and the Rio de Las Putos (or Putah Creek) on the north. About one hundred and fifty acres of the southern portion of Solano County are swamp and overflow lands. There is an uninterrupted navigable waterfront of about sixty miles running from the southwestern portion of the county (San Pablo Bay) to the most eastern point of the county (near Sacramento).⁹ The first known American settler of Solano County was John R. Wolfskill, who located on the Wolfskill grant near Putah Creek in 1842. His neighbors were George Yount in Napa County and John

Sutter at Sacramento (or Sutter Fort).¹⁰

Five Mexican land grants within Solano County's boundaries were patented by the United States Government, and two others were denied by the courts. The two grants that covered the Fairfield-Suisun area were:

The Suisun Rancho of four square leagues was petitioned for by Chief Solano, January 16, 1837, with General Vallejo's help. Approved by Governor Alvarado, January 21, 1842, the grant covered Suisun Valley. Chief Solano sold it for \$1,000 to General Vallejo, May 10, 1812. Then on August 29, 1850, the General sold it to A. A. Ritchie for \$50,000 with Robert Waterman acquiring a third interest. The U. S. Patent to the 17,752 acres was made January 17, 1857, by President Franklin Pierce.

The Tolenas, or Armijo Grant was given to Jose Armijo, March 4, 1840, by Governor Alvarado. Located in the Tolenas area, boundary disputes developed and the United States Patent for the 13,315 acres was finally given October 12, 1868, by President Andrew Johnson.

Other grants approved were the Los Putos Rancho (Vacaville area), in which a patent was approved on June 4, 1858 by President James Buchanan; the Rio de Los Putos (near Putah Creek) patent was granted on December 18, 1858, by President James Buchanan; the Los Ulpinos Rancho (Montezuma area) patent was signed by President Andrew Johnson, August 9, 1866. The Soscol Rancho (Vallejo area) and the Luco (or El Sobrante) Rancho were rejected by the American courts.¹¹

Benicia was the pioneer city of Solano County and the place where in 1849, the county's first hotel, school, and post office opened. The Presbyterians built the county's first Protestant church. Another pioneer commun-

ity was Suisun City located on the northeastern end of Suisun Bay. Suisun City was originally called "The Island", because it was located on a few lots that were higher than the tides, but lower than the slough's bottom. The Bay's waters washed around and over the flats between Suisun City and the area which became Fairfield.¹²

The founders of Fairfield, Captain Robert Waterman and his friend A. A. Ritchie, acquired land which was then part of the Armijo grant and Suisun Rancho. They later had the land surveyed for a townsite and named the new town Fairfield. The town was named after Fairfield, Connecticut, the place where Captain Waterman was born. In 1858 when the move was underway to relocate the county seat from Benicia, Waterman offered to deed to Solano County about sixteen acres of Fairfield's land, provided the county selected Fairfield as the location for a new county seat. In the 1858 county seat convention, the records listed Captain Waterman's offer as follows:

To deed to the Board of Supervisors of Solano County a certain piece of land containing about sixteen acres, known upon the plat of the town of Fairfield as 'Union Park', also four blocks, each block containing twelve lots, to be selected as follows, two from the north and two from the south, or two from the east of 'Union Park.'¹³

In addition to this offer, Waterman offered to enter a bond for \$10,000 to help pay for the construction and move of the county government to Fairfield. On September 18, 1858, the voters of Solano County in a general election accepted Captain Waterman's offer and approved the move of

the county seat of government from Benicia to Fairfield. Within a few weeks after approval, the county records were moved to Fairfield and placed in a temporary court house.¹⁴

In 1858 the County Board of Supervisors called for plans for a court house and jail to be constructed in Union Park. In January, 1859, they asked the state legislature to pass an act, authorizing them to levy a special tax of fifty cents on each one hundred dollars worth of property for a period of two years. The money was used to pay for the new county buildings.¹⁵ Out of ten bids submitted for the construction of the new court house and jail, the Larkin Richardson's Construction Company offer of \$24,440 was accepted.¹⁶

The Solano County Herald reported in its October 2, 1858 edition that the brick buildings erected by Captain Waterman at Fairfield for the county clerk and treasurer office were completed. It also reported that the county clerk and the county treasurer took possession of their offices. The Solano County county seat of government had been firmly established in Fairfield.¹⁷

In spite of the transfer of the county seat from Benicia to Fairfield, the town remained hardly more than an extended village. By 1878, the major buildings in Fairfield consisted of the county buildings and a short strip of store fronts along Texas street. Included among the buildings were a post office, a court house, a jail, a Methodist Church, a public school, and a hotel. Some of the major

streets were Texas, Kentucky, Empire, Missouri, Delaware, Broadway, Ohio, and Illinois running east and west, and Pennsylvania, Great Jones, Taylor, Madison, Jackson, Webster, Jefferson, Union, Clay, and Washington running north and south. There were two railroads passing through the city, the Sacramento Northern and the California Pacific railroads. (see Appendix A).¹⁸

The two railroad lines opened connections to San Francisco to the south west and Sacramento to the east. More important to the local economy, the railroads tapped the surrounding agricultural areas and led to the development of food processing, storage and transshipment industries. The main function of the economy of both communities (Fairfield and Suisun) was to provide wholesale and retail services to the surrounding agricultural areas.¹⁹

Fairfield was the county seat of Solano County for over forty years before it became incorporated as a city in 1903. Suisun City, however, had been incorporated as a city in 1868 and had been the dominant trade and commercial center of the area until the time of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Although neighboring Fairfield was the county seat after 1858, Suisun City reaped much of the benefit from being the center of the county's commerce. For example, the Solano County Herald, the first county newspaper, moved from Benicia to Suisun where it became the Solano Republican, and then the Daily Republic, which is now published in Fairfield.²⁰

In the five decades after 1880, Fairfield and its

neighbor grew slowly. Census data:

Year	Fairfield	Suisun
1880	400	600
1890	500	700
1900	700	800
1910	800	850
1920	1000	875
1930	1131	905

By 1930 the population consisted largely of California-born Anglo-Americans. With the completion of the Trans-continental railroad, a few Chinese settled in the Fairfield-Suisun area, and a small number of Japanese had moved from the surrounding agricultural area to take up abode in the twin cities. As far as it is known there were no blacks and only a handful of Indians; Hispanics continued to live in Fairfield and Suisun City but it is difficult to determine their precise number. Fairfield, thus, had a homogenous population typical of many counties in the Central Valley of northern California.²¹

In the meantime, the most thriving industry in the Fairfield-Suisun area in the 1920s and the early 30's was in the town of Cement Hill, California. The town was owned by the Pacific Cement Company and was a self contained community with over 1000 inhabitants. Cement Hill was located just northeast of Fairfield in the "Dickie Hills" and had its own school, stores and homes for its employees. The cement plant in the town was one of the largest of its kind in northern California and was an economic boost to the Fairfield-Suisun and Vacaville areas. The plant had its own machine shop and built and repaired its own loco-

motives.²²

The electric powered locomotives were used to transport finished cement products down the Dickie Hills to await transportation by rail to destinations throughout the United States. Concrete was in demand for the building of hydraulic structures such as bridges and dams. The cement produced in the Cement Hill plant used clay as one of its prime ingredients and clay was plentiful in the Dickie Hills. However, in the early 1930's, limestone came to be used in preparing cement. Clay became too expensive to use and the entire operation at Cement Hill was closed down and moved to Redwood City, California.²³

Cement Hill, California became a ghost town. The storage tanks which remained are now used to dry grain and corn. The quarry still remains at the top of Dickie Hills. The houses that once stood in Cement Hill were moved to the Fairfield-Suisun area.²⁴

Until the mid 1920's, Solano County had no major roads connecting the county with Sacramento, the Bay Area, and the rest of the state. For example, before 1916, the county which is located midway between San Francisco and Sacramento, was somewhat like an island. In order to travel between the two cities across Solano County by automobile, it was necessary to cross the Carquinez Strait by ferry on the southwest side of the county. On the eastern side, the Yolo Basin was flooded in the winter when the Sacramento River overflowed its banks. The best way to travel between

San Francisco and Sacramento was to by-pass Solano County and travel by way of Stockton. This was the reason that Suisun City was a thriving community since the city had a deep water channel to Suisun Bay and the Sacramento River.²⁵

The Bureau of Highways recognized that the Yolo Basin was in a strategic location and because of the annual Sacramento River floods, Sacramento was isolated from the west side of the basin, namely Solano and Yolo counties. It was this condition that led to the construction of the Yolo Causeway in 1916. The Yolo Causeway was of primary significance to the Sacramento Valley because it connected Solano County and Fairfield, and also opened the northern Sierras to Solano county motorists who could drive directly to Lake Tahoe, the Bear and the Feather River country. The causeway was opened for public traffic on May 27, 1916. It was expanded to four lanes in 1932.²⁶

Where the Yolo Causeway connected Solano County by road to Sacramento and points east, the construction of the Carquinez Strait Bridge in 1927 connected Solano County by road to Oakland and other cities bordering the Bay. The Carquinez Strait bridge was important in that it was no longer necessary to wait for a ferry to carry automobiles across the Strait. (The average waiting time for a ferry during rush periods on weekends and holidays was close to seven hours.) With the completion of this bridge it was now possible to travel by car from Sacramento over the

Yolo Causeway, through Fairfield, and over the Carquinez bridge to Oakland and other points in the Bay area.²⁷

The final construction that completed the road from Sacramento to San Francisco was the building of the Oakland to San Francisco bridge. This bridge connected Oakland, Yerba Buena Island and San Francisco. The bridge, completed in 1936, was eight and one fourth miles long, and was also a double decked structure. During the same period, the Golden Gate bridge was built and completed in 1937. It had a length of 9266 feet and spanned a strait of 4,200 feet. In 1937, the Golden Gate exposition celebrated the building of the Golden Gate and the Oakland Bay Bridges. Solano county played a leading role in celebrating this exposition. One day was named "Solano County's" day. At last, the highway link was completed. One could drive an automobile from Sacramento through Fairfield and into San Francisco and north into Marin county.²⁸

The completion of the heavily traveled U. S. Highway 40 through the center of Fairfield led to the decline of Suisun City as a major trading and shipping center. Many businesses moved from Suisun and relocated along the highway passing through Fairfield. Agricultural products were shipped out of the Fairfield-Suisun Valley more and more by trucks than by ships from Suisun City. Fairfield was now served by both an intercontinental highway and railroad. The foundation had been completed for the area's development and growth.²⁹

In politics, little changed in either Fairfield or Suisun in the half century after 1880. Local elections aroused interest and campaigns provided color and drama, but power remained in the hands of a local merchant elite. The two cities normally voted Republican in national elections and sent solid, conservative Republicans to the State house in Sacramento.³⁰

The coming of the Great Depression affected Fairfield and the surrounding agricultural areas upon which much of the prosperity of the community was based. However, being removed from the agri-business areas of the Salinas and Imperial Valleys, Fairfield was little touched by the trouble of migratory labor that came from the dust bowl of Oklahoma. Unemployment was common in Fairfield (in 1932 about 20 percent of the people were unemployed) and local relief proved inadequate to meet the needs of the poorer citizens. In 1932, Fairfield workers supported the national Democratic ticket and the New Deal programs which followed.³¹

Under various New Deal programs, Fairfield benefited from welfare and work relief programs. With Work Progress Administration (WPA) labor, streets were paved and curbed, sidewalks were extended and parks were improved. As in many American cities, public works during the Great Depression led to improvement in recreational facilities. For example, in 1939, flood lights were placed at Armijo High School field so that night baseball could be played.

In fact, the first night softball game played in Fairfield was July 6, 1939.³²

There was a warning of war in Fairfield in 1939. For instance, Dr. William Breed of the College of the Pacific, in an address to the Fairfield Lions Club, made a plea for strict neutrality for the United States in the European war. He stated that if arms were sold to belligerents, it would lead to an American involvement in the European conflict. He also said that the primary purpose of every American citizen was to keep out of war.³³

On the national level, Congress was asked to approve a \$1,300,000,000 expansion program for the navy, designed to make possible a two ocean fleet. While the Pacific coast would gain in defense programs, California and other Pacific coast states would be asked to cut their request for federal aid since Congress was unlikely to vote an increase in taxes to meet the rising defense costs. Some of the programs affected by the cuts in the Fairfield area were farm subsidies, the Central Valley Project, the Public Works Authority (PWA) and the WPA.³⁴

On the international level, there were daily reports from the Orient about news of bloodshed, pillage and plunder exerted by the Japanese, who were not only warring against the Chinese but foreigners (American and Europeans) who had an interest in the Orient. At the same time, there were expressions of friendship between the two nations. For example, on the local level, Japanese

citizens who had migrated to the Fairfield area were involved in community affairs as well as business and home ownership. There was even an all Japanese softball team in the city's softball league.³⁵

In this chapter, the discussion of the Fairfield area before 1940 brought to the forefront some of the activities that played an active role in the development of Fairfield's history. Its history parallels the history of the State of California. As California developed as a state, the social, economic, and the political structure of the Indian's society was destroyed by white settlers from both the United States and Europe, who were trying to make a better lifestyle for themselves. After the Bear Flag revolt at Sonoma, California became a state, and this vast land area was divided into counties. Solano County, in which Fairfield is the county seat, was the twenty first county selected when the land was divided. Fairfield was an excellent location for the county seat since it was located almost in the center of the county.

Fairfield, with its small population did not develop as fast as the cities around her before 1940, however, the potential for development and expansion was always there. The building of the Yolo Causeway, the Carquinez Strait bridge, and the San Francisco to Oakland bridge made it possible for the City of Fairfield to have both a trans-continental highway and railroad passing through its city limits. In the next chapter, a closer look at Fairfield

Fairfield during 1940 and 1941 will be undertaken.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER I

¹Neighboring Communities Salute Travis Air Force Base (Midland, Texas: BP Industries, Inc., 1974), p. 31.

²Ibid., pp. 3-4.

³R. F. Heizer and M. S. Whipple, The California Indians: A Source Book (2d ed.: Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 487.

⁴Ibid., p. 488.

⁵Wallace Hebbert, ed., The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, II (San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1886), pp. 91-92.

⁶Walton Bean, California: An Interpretive History (2d ed.: New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1973), pp. 68-69; Robert S. Smilie, The Sonoma Mission: San Francisco De Sonoma (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1975), p. 62.

⁷Tom Gregory, History of Solano and Napa Counties, California (Los Angeles: Historical Record Company, 1912), p. 47.

⁸Ibid., p. 54.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 57.

¹¹Wilmere Jordan Neitzel, Solano County History and Government (San Francisco: The James Berry Company, 1966), pp. 4-5; Smilie. op. cit., p. 77.

¹²Gregory, op. cit., p. 73.

¹³Marguerite Hunt, History of Solano County, I (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1926), pp. 241-243.

¹⁴J. P. Munro Fraser, History of Solano County (San Francisco: Wood Alley and Company, 1879), p. 60; Hunt, op. cit., pp. 240-243.

¹⁵Hunt, op. cit., p. 243.

¹⁶Ibid.

- ¹⁷Solano County Herald, October 2, 1858, p. 1.
- ¹⁸Thompson and West Historical Atlas Map of Solano County, California (San Francisco: Thompson and West, 1878), p. 57.
- ¹⁹Hunt, op. cit., p. 240.
- ²⁰Weitzel, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
- ²¹Hunt, op. cit., pp. 238-239.
- ²²Historical Calendars Series: Regional Heritage (Vacaville, California: B and G Publishers, 1976), pp. 4-5.
- ²³Ibid.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Joseph A. McGowan, History of the Sacramento Valley (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961), p. 89.
- ²⁶Ibid., pp. 89-91.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 244.
- ²⁸Ibid., pp. 53-54.
- ²⁹Ron Campbell, "Suisun Past, Rich In Heritage and Color," Daily Republic, October 10, 1976.
- ³⁰Solano Republican, October 11, 1932.
- ³¹Ibid., October 10, 1932; Bean, op. cit., pp. 443-446.
- ³²Ibid., July 6, 1939.
- ³³Ibid., September 15, 1939.
- ³⁴Ibid., November 16, 1939.
- ³⁵Ibid., August 10, 1939.

CHAPTER II

THE FAIRFIELD AREA IN 1940 AND 1941

Fairfield holds leading positions in annals of the county and state. Its past makes interesting history. Its present is bright with promise of even a brighter future. Solano Republican, August 15, 1970.

Fairfield is centrally located in Solano County. By 1940 it was on the main transcontinental Lincoln Highway (U. S. 40) which extended from Oakland and San Francisco to Sacramento, Salt Lake City, and to the east coast of the United States. The city had a local and transcontinental railroad through the Suisun Slough to Benicia and San Francisco to the west and Sacramento and New York City to the east. In 1940, Fairfield advertised herself as a wisely and economically governed city. It was the county seat and commercial center for farming, shipping, and fishing activities.¹

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, in 1940, advertised in the Solano Republican that home seekers would do well to consider Solano County's many assets, its splendid small towns with excellent churches, schools, homes, industries, and business houses. They urged visitors to include in their California itinerary one of the world's greatest shipbuilding establishments, the Mare Island Navy Ship Yard at Vallejo. The ultimate goal of the supervisors was to get people to come to California and settle in Solano

County. In 1940, the population of Solano County was small. For example, the population of Fairfield was 1312, Dixon 1108, Suisun 706, Benicia 2419, Vacaville 1614, Rio Vista 1666, and Vallejo 20,072. Of these seven Solano County cities, Fairfield was among the smallest and the slowest growing of the group. Population of Solano County in 1940 was 49,118.²

Fairfield's business world in 1940 gave the public a variety of small stores and shops where goods and services could be bought and sold. Some examples of the businesses serving the Fairfield area in 1940 are listed as follows:³

1. Hansen Funeral Home
2. Sprouse Reitz 5-10 Store
3. F. C. McInnis Attorney
4. Gillespie Cleaners
5. Marianno Auto Service
6. Liberty Shoe Repair Shop
7. Fairfield Feed Store
8. J. S. Evans Grocery
9. Diamond Match (Lumber) Co.
10. The Hyde Company
11. Mortensen's Grocery
12. Richfield Service Station
13. Noah Adams Lumber Company
14. Ambrosio Creamery
15. Solano County Grocery
16. Woodard Chevrolet Company
17. Walter M. Hunter Rexall Drug
18. Regle's Pharmacy
19. Fairfield Theater
20. Artistic Beauty Salon

The business community urged shoppers to buy in Fairfield and take advantage of the many opportunities available in their own home town. Business people stressed the fact that shoppers lived only minutes from the shopping center and market place with the finest of everything produced in

the country.⁴ To keep the shoppers spending their money in Fairfield, the business community placed a full page advertisement in the Solano Republican which said to shoppers that:

You need to go no further than the avenues of our modern stores to find the necessities of life as well as the luxuries that make living worth while; and perhaps you have overlooked how well stocked our stores are and how sincerely they try to keep prices in line...and the people who live and work in Fairfield also spend their money to keep pace with progress, pay taxes, send their children to school where they grew up as friends of your children. You can buy in Fairfield to help make the community grow and at the same time take advantage of the shopping opportunity of your home town.⁵

Fairfield was a modest community with a small population and with prices to fit everyone's pocket. One of the biggest paying employers was the railroad and the average wage paid was between fifty cents and seventy-five cents per hour. For example, one could buy a four bedroom completely furnished house for \$3250. A modern bedroom suite sold for \$59.95, a breakfast set for \$21.95, and floor lamps for as little as \$6.95. Ladies house coats were \$1.98, dresses \$21.95 and up, and ladies sport coats sold for \$12.95. Fairfield, in the opinion of the business community leaders, was the place to shop and live.⁶

Building construction started to pick up in Fairfield in 1940, but not on a large scale. Some of the more important construction projects in 1940 were the building activities along Empire Street, which included the razing of an old barn in order to make room for a new apartment house. Another project was the \$20,000 brick structure to

house the Sprouse Reitz ice cream parlor and two new stores. These two new stores were built on the corner of Texas and Webster street and on a 50 by 150 foot lot.⁷

Another important construction project that meant a great deal to the City of Fairfield was the Dr. Gordon Bunney's Hospital. This hospital, built in 1940, was the beginning of a new era in Fairfield because it gave the community a modern hospital which was erected on the corner of Empire and Pennsylvania Avenue at a cost of \$15,000. The hospital, built by the L. J. Klingsell building contractors, was the most modern and most complete hospital ever built in the Fairfield area.⁸

In 1940 Solano County and the Fairfield area had a school system with facilities for all grades. The city schools were governed by the School District's Board of Education. Each member was elected by voters of the city. The school board employed a Superintendent of Schools to oversee the operation of the district schools. The County Superintendent of Schools was the administrative head of the County Office of Education. He was elected by the voters of the county. The County Superintendent of schools served in the dual capacity as an official of the State of California and as head of the Solano County Department of Education. The County Board of Education was elected by the voters of the county and was the policy-making body of the county education system. As the county seat of Solano County, Fairfield had both the county and

the city Office of Education located in the city.⁹

Armijo High School (established in 1890) was the only senior high school serving the city in 1940. There were thirteen elementary schools located either in Fairfield's city limits or within ten miles from the heart of the city. The names of the elementary schools serving the Fairfield area in 1940 were Crystal, Tolenas, Fairfield, Green Valley, Crescent Island, Dover, Gomer, Rockville, Suisun, Center, Union, Falls, and Willow Springs. At the end of the school year all of these schools jointly had a common graduation program on the same night at Armijo High School. It might be noted at this point that Armijo High School won the California State Basketball championship in 1940.¹⁰

Numerous institutions of high learning were available to the graduates of Armijo High School. For example, the University of California, Berkeley, and Davis campuses, were within one hour's driving time from the Fairfield area. Also in 1940, the California Maritime Academy selected Vallejo in Solano County as the site of its California Academy. These plus other institutions of higher learning provided excellent opportunities for the Fairfield high school graduates to expand their education close to home.¹¹

Politically, Fairfield like many other small towns in California followed the lead of those pioneers who settled first in the town. Both the function and the fin-

ances of Fairfield in 1940 were limited. Elected officials consisted of a mayor and five city councilmen, none of whom were paid, and most of them were local merchants. The city employed five policemen and around twenty five individuals as secretaries, clerks, and workers providing various city services.¹²

The largest source of city funds came from property taxes and the sale of water by the city owned water works. Smaller sums came from licenses, court fines, franchises and the sale of public lands. Thus in 1940 the city had a modest income of \$36,399.84, or roughly \$27.74 per tax payer. It is obvious that in 1940 the tax base of Fairfield was limited, local property taxes were relatively low (\$1.60 per \$1,000 property value), but in a city that had few public needs, the city government adequately served its citizens.¹³

November 7, 1940 was election day in Fairfield. The Solano Republican reported that the greatest presidential election in history returned President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the White House. The Democrats took California and Solano County by 3 to 1 over Wendel Wilkie.¹⁴

The breakdown of registered voters in Solano County in 1940 are listed as follows:¹⁵

Party	Vallejo	County	Total
Republicans	3,952	3,844	7,796
Democrats	11,119	4,868	15,987
Socialists	11	5	16
Prohibitionists	12	4	16
Progressive	22	7	29
Townsend	45	16	61
Communist	0	1	1
Decline to state	123	60	183
Total	15,284	8,805	24,089

Of the two major political parties there were 15,987 Democrats and 7,796 Republicans. The 24,000 registered voters in Solano County in 1940 were just under one half of the total population of the county. Most of the voters in Fairfield were registered Democrats in 1940.

According to the 1940 census, the population of the county showed an increase from the 1930's. A comparison of Solano County cities for the decade since 1930 is listed as follows:¹⁶

City	1940	1930
Benicia	2,415	2,913
Dixon	1,105	1,000
Fairfield	1,312	1,131
Rio Vista	1,666	1,309
Suisun	697	905
Vacaville	1,608	1,556
Vallejo	20,038	14,476
Inside Cities	28,841	23,290
Outside Cities	19,939	17,344
Total County	48,780	40,634

The reason that Vallejo showed a large increase was because by 1940 the Mare Island Navy Shipyard increased the number of employees working at the facility. By contrast, Suisun City showed a decline because after World War I, when the Lincoln Highway (U. S. 40) was routed through Fairfield, many Suisun businesses moved to Fairfield and relocated alongside of the highway.¹⁷

According to the County Clerk's records, 1940 was a busy year. For example, there were 397 marriage licenses issued, 35 criminal charges filed, and no murder trials conducted. In addition, the county sheriff was kept busy investigating automobile accidents occurring on the county's

roads. One such accident occurred on May 23, 1940, when a black woman was hurt in a car accident near the east Fairfield city limits. In the car were four blacks, all residents of Sacramento. The injured woman was rushed to the local hospital and quickly released because there were no hotel or motel facilities to accomodate her or her companions in Fairfield.¹⁸

Churches were a vital part of Fairfield's society, and like local politics and the local schools, they were dominated by those pioneer Anglo-Saxon Protestants who settled here first. Despite the Catholic heritage from the Spanish and the Mexicans, Catholic representation was small compared to the Protestant majority. By 1940 Fairfield had these churches serving the community and the surrounding area: St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in Suisun (established in 1860), Grace Episcopal Church (established in 1857), Methodist Church (established in 1849), the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, the Christian Science Church, the Church of Christ in Vacaville, and several other small Protestant churches. The old Rockville Church (near Rockville and about six miles from Fairfield) was dedicated as a chapel for use by the general public and by all denominations.¹⁹

In the age devoid of television, Fairfield and Suisun churches provided recreation as well as religious experience. For example, church buildings served as auditoriums for many secular events; church clubs brought members together for bingo games, musical events, picnics,

and cookouts, debates on public issues, book reviews, weddings, and just for having a good time. In addition, many Fairfield churches sponsored programs that kept youngsters occupied.²⁰

The Fairfield-Suisun area offered many opportunities for popular recreation. For example, the Suisun Slough leads to the vast game region and recreational waterways of Solano County, the Sacramento River, Carquinez Strait, San Pablo and San Francisco Bays. In 1940 pheasant and duck hunting, and fishing were popular sports in the the easily available Suisun Marsh area. One organization that took advantage of the many hunting opportunities in the Suisun Marsh area was the Ducks Unlimited Club. In 1940 the duck club had an asset value of more than \$750,000. This meant dollars and cents to Solano County, and particularly to the Fairfield area. This income did not include the thousands of dollars spent by non-resident sportsmen every season.²¹

Fairfield banks were doing a profitable business for a town this size. For instance, the First National Bank of Fairfield reported on January 18, 1940, that its total asset was over \$835,430.00 and total deposits over \$736,079.00. Other banks in Fairfield and Suisun reported similar assets and deposits. Money was available for Fairfield's citizens to borrow to purchase cars, furniture, and homes. Also during this period, large corporate banks began to move into the Fairfield-Suisun area. On January 2, 1941, the Bank of Suisun and the First National Bank of

Fairfield were united as branches of the Bank of America.²²

With improvement in the national economy, agriculture in the Fairfield-Suisun area was booming. The Solano Republican reported on November 5, 1940, that the world's oldest and largest cherry bearing orchard was located in Green Valley near Cordelia. In one year more than 90,000 boxes of cherries were shipped from the orchard to eastern markets. Green Valley was known throughout the country for its cherries, which ripen earlier than in other sections of the state. In addition, the Cordelia area was the center of a remarkable grape growing region.²³

The national government began to take an interest in the Fairfield-Suisun area. In 1940 the Civil Aeronautic Administration (today's Federal Aviation Authority) invited the Solano County Supervisors and officials from both Fairfield and Suisun to participate in locating a military airfield near Fairfield and Suisun. Navy authorities had already scouted the location because of the strong prevailing winds which simulated conditions encountered on decks of aircraft carriers during aircraft takeoffs and landings. Little news about this program was published by the local newspapers. It was a well kept secret.²⁴

The national government also wanted to increase the number of men in the armed forces. To support this need in the Fairfield-Suisun area, Selective Service Board 49 moved from Suisun City to the second floor of the First National Bank Building on Texas Street in Fairfield. The

purpose of the move was to speed up the number of men drafted into the military. The Solano Republican reported that hundreds registered for the new United States Army. In the Fairfield-Suisun area 628 men registered for the draft, while Vallejo had 5079. By August, 1941, there were over 200 Solanoans serving in the United States Army. Fairfield and Solano County, like many other cities and counties in California, did more than their share in supporting the national military manpower needs.²⁵

The first military troops to come to Fairfield were from the United States Army. They bivouacked for over a week across U. S. Highway 40 near Fairfield. They came during the last week of June 1941, and were about 10,000 strong. These troops were members of the Ninth Army Corps returning from maneuvers in the Sierra foothills to their base at Camp Lewis, Washington. Some of the units in the group consisted of the 18th Engineers, 209th Military Police, 56th Medical Battalion, 47th Quartermaster Battalion, 60th Signal Corps, and the 69th Engineers Battalion.²⁶

The Fairfield business community was proud to have these troops spend their time and money in the city and gave them a warm welcome. Mayor Will Gluson and some Fairfield community leaders went to the troops' bivouac area and presented a formal welcoming proclamation to them. The Solano Republican reported that "The boys arrived with their unspent pay and proceeded to eat the town down to a nubbin and well succeeded. The bars and drink establish-

ments didn't do so badly either."²⁷

Many Fairfield citizens wondered whether the United States was preparing for war. Certainly many people sympathized with the struggle and hardship that Great Britain and France were undergoing. They did not want either England or France defeated. On the other hand, many of these citizens were opposed to sending American troops overseas to fight or to be killed. In fact, the Fairfield community was still troubled by the Great Depression of the early 1930s. Fairfield citizens, as well as many other California and Solano citizens, wanted to support the war with money and materials but not with American blood.²⁸

On the national defense front, Congress approved a budget for \$1,300,000,000 for the expansion of the United States Navy. This expansion program was designed to make possible a two ocean fleet. The program was of great financial benefit to California and other Pacific coast states because it meant that more defense dollars would be pouring into these states. The Mare Island Navy Shipyard (established in 1854) had a major role in the western expansion of the Navy. This was a boost for the Fairfield-Suisun area since many citizens found employment at the Shipyard.²⁹

One major problem with this expansion was that Congress did not vote on a tax increase to meet the rising defense cost. This meant that other federal programs in California had to be reduced or cancelled. Some of the programs feeling the sting in the Fairfield area were the

Work Progress Administration (WPA), Public Works Administration (PWA), farm subsidies, and the Central Valley Water Project. Since a strong argument was taken by the large landowners of California, including the powerful agriculture industry, the Central Valley Project was saved from federal budgetary cuts. The purpose of the project was to increase crop production through a better system of irrigation. California, Fairfield, and the agricultural areas of the Central Valley were blessed with this decision, because the new water supply kept agriculture as the leading industry in California.³⁰

Even though the nation was not at war, President Franklin Roosevelt decided to build a defense ring around the entire western hemisphere; he also wanted a greatly enlarged Army Air Force. This decision by the president was the shot in the arm that the state of California needed. It meant that more money for military construction and operation was in the planning stage for the west coast. This decision also played a key role in the development of the Fairfield-Suisun economy.³¹

In summary, Solano County and the Fairfield-Suisun area in 1940 and 1941 had become one of California's outstanding counties featuring agriculture and industry, grain and stock raising, dairying, manufacturing, shipping, oil and gas production, and the Mare Island Navy Shipyard. The county Supervisors wanted the newcomers to see orchards and farms in the Fairfield-Suisun and Vaca Valleys, asparagus

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER II

¹Joseph A. McGowan, History of the Sacramento Valley, II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961), p. 306; Solano Republican, November 5, 1940.

²"The Solano County Board of Supervisors in 1940 were J. B. Danielson, Suisun City; Carl Schneisen, Dixon; Dan Foley, Vallejo; Charles Brown, Rio Vista; and George C. Demmon, Vallejo (Chairman). Fairfield did not have a member." (Solano Republican, November 5, 1940); California Statistical Abstract, Table 7, Bureau of Census, 1961.

³Solano Republican, May 30, 1940.

⁴Ibid., September 25, 1941.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 7.

⁷Ibid., June 13, 1940.

⁸Ibid., August 15, 1940.

⁹Wilmere Jordan Neitzel, Solano County History and Government (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Co., 1966), pp. 55-56.

¹⁰Marguerite Hunt, History of Solano County, I (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1926), pp. 239-240; Solano Republican, June 15, 1939, March 14, 1940.

¹¹Solano Republican, December 26, 1940.

¹²"Elections were held every two years and elected councilmen served for a period of four years." Solano Republican, August 22, 1940.

¹³"Financial statement, City of Fairfield, September 1940" Solano Republican, September 26, 1940.

¹⁴Ibid., November 9, 1940.

¹⁵Ibid., July 25, 1940.

¹⁶"1940 census of the third Congressional District" Solano Republican, July 18, 1940.

¹⁷Ron Campbell, "Suisun Past Rich In Heritage and Color," Daily Republic, October 10, 1976; W. H. Hutchison, California: Two Centuries of Man, Land, and Growth In the Golden State (Palo Alto: American West Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 211-212.

¹⁸"Busy Year shown by the county clerk's report for 1939," Solano Republican, January 5, 1939.; See also Ibid., May 23, 1940.

¹⁹Solano Republican, December 18, 1941.; J.P. Munro Fraser, The History of Solano County (San Francisco: Wood, Alley and Company, 1879) p. 294; Hunt, op. cit., pp. 239-240.

²⁰Solano Republican, May 30, 1940.

²¹Ibid., October 26, 1939.

²²Ibid., January 18, 1940.

²³Ibid., November 5, 1940; McGowan, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁴"History of Travis Air Force Base" (MSS in Travis Air Force Base Library), Base Library FL 4427, December 8, 1941, p. 2-1. Hereafter this collection is cited as Travis AFB papers; Solano Republican, January 13, 1940.

²⁵Ibid., October 17, 1940; April 24, 1941.

²⁶Ibid., July 8, 1941.

²⁷Ibid., June 26, 1941.

²⁸Ibid., April 24, 1941.

²⁹Ibid., November 16, 1939.

³⁰Ibid., November 16, 1939; Walton Bean, California An Interpretive History, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1973) pp. 401-408; McGowan, op. cit., pp. 346-348.

³¹Jack Goodman, ed., While You Were Gone: A Report On Wartime Life In The United States (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1946), pp. 4-5; Solano Republican, November 16, 1939, p. 3.

CHAPTER III

FAIRFIELD AND WORLD WAR II

It's only a war keep cool. Whether or not bombs drop on Fairfield or invasion, we are at war, a real devastating, relentless war, and in it to the finish. When the bombs dropped on Honolulu last Sunday [December 7] morning, two political parties were wiped out, the Democrats and the Republicans. Today there is but one party in America and that is the American Party...The President of the United States has spoken; no matter how long it will take us, the American people in their righteous might will come through to absolute victory. We will not only defend ourselves to the utmost, but we will make certain that this form of treachery will never endanger us again. Solano Republican, December 11, 1941.

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, the citizens of Fairfield heard the following announcement over their radios: "We interrupt this broadcast to tell you that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by Japanese aircraft." The Japanese attack destroyed most of the United States Pacific Fleet with most of our defending aircraft on the ground. The citizens of Fairfield were shocked and were particularly afraid that the Japanese would attack California and Fairfield next. Some of the citizens became hostile toward those Japanese citizens living next door as neighbors and in the surrounding communities. For example, there were reports of open attacks on Japanese citizens living in Vallejo and Vacaville. In Vacaville, shots were fired into the Buddhist Temple. Japanese were warned by the police chief not to move about too freely during the day and

remain at home during the night.¹ In Vallejo, two Japanese were arrested but later released.

The first printed local news to reach the people of Fairfield concerning the attack on Pearl Harbor came through the weekly newspaper on Thursday, December 11, 1941. The paper reported that the "World goes around like revolving doors and that history was made since the last edition, and the citizens of Fairfield are on alert." The front page carried a message telling the citizens of Fairfield to keep cool and that the American people would emerge victorious. The paper also reported that the bombs and torpedoes did great damage to American ships and planes at Pearl Harbor. Many ships were sunk and almost every plane the United States had in the area was destroyed. Also, since the American fleet was destroyed, no one knew where the Japanese fleet was located and many citizens of Fairfield and other California cities were fearful that the Japanese were on their way to attack California cities. The immediacy of the Japanese attack was made greater by the fact there were soldiers and sailors from the Fairfield area stationed at Pearl Harbor.²

Fairfield city officials, like many other California city officials, quickly made plans to deal with an air attack. Air raid sirens, which sounded like sirens on fire engines, were placed throughout the city. If the sirens began to shriek, all traffic was supposed to stop. People were placed on top of water towers throughout the coastal cities, including Fairfield, to serve as lookouts

for approaching Japanese aircrafts. As days passed, the city of Fairfield began to have practice air raids in order to prepare for such attacks. The first air raid practice was a success and the city officials were pleased with the cooperation received from the citizens in going through the exercise.³

Now that the United States was officially involved in the Second World War, California factories and farms helped to provide the supplies and manpower needed to support the nation's war efforts. Agricultural products needed to supply the nation at war came from agriculture areas like the Fairfield-Suisun Valley. With the defense build-up before Pearl Harbor, many Fairfield citizens had found work at the near-by Vallejo Navy Shipyard. The expansion of the shipyards at Vallejo, Richmond, and San Francisco, provided more people from Fairfield and Suisun City with jobs at these yards and in other war related industries. The demand for men and women at the shipyards was greater than the supply of man and woman power living in the Fairfield area. Because so many men were in the military and in war industries, women of the community took over more of the jobs at home. They drove trucks, operated farm machinery, and labored in factories. Also, the fruit picking industry employed many women and children from the Fairfield area to pick fruit grown in the Fairfield-Suisun Valley. A large portion of this fruit was sent to the armed forces for use by the troops.⁴

A labor shortage among the local citizens meant that Fairfield as well as other California cities had to go elsewhere to find people to fill jobs. As a result, workers, including thousands of blacks and Mexicans, poured into California to help on farms and in factories. In the 1940s, the non-white population rose from less than one percent to more than 14 percent. This influx of people into the Fairfield-Suisun area meant that everything was crowded, including schools, trains, busses, and stores. Wages were good, but housing was poor. There was little time or materials to build new houses because military construction had the priority. In addition to the shortage of housing, there was a shortage of gasoline, which played a key role in keeping the automobiles off the highways and the people away from their vacations.⁵

Things that had been regarded by the Fairfield community as necessities had now become luxuries. For example, meat, sugar, and gasoline were rationed. In charge of the rationing was the Office of Price Administration (OPA) which had more than 60,000 paid employees and branches throughout the country. They also had thousands of volunteer workers who sat on Rationing and War Price Boards for the purpose of uncovering black market operations. There were black markets for gasoline, nylon stockings, meats, automobile tires and other items. The black market flourished in Fairfield as in other California and American communities because Americans have always

been inclined to disobey laws they do not like. For example, in Fairfield, some filling stations sold gasoline coupons, some butchers sold steaks at illegal prices, and some retailers and restaurant dealers conspired with wholesalers to get more than their share of rationed goods. In some cases fines were levied, but for the most part, the OPA was handicapped because of an inadequate enforcement staff and a complacent public.⁶

Federal money poured into California communities for the sole purpose of supporting the war effort. The bulk of the money was used for new and expanded military installations and for new defense industries. At this time the citizens of Fairfield were making more money than ever before, but could not enjoy spending it because of a shortage of civilian goods and the government rationing program. In Fairfield, as in other parts of the country, prices rose rapidly in 1942 until the government stabilized prices by 1943 and surplus income was absorbed by patriotic inducements to purchase war bonds.⁷

The cry in Fairfield was "Remember Pearl Harbor! Remember it every day! Buy United States defense stamps and savings bonds!" In addition, since the Fairfield area was an important agricultural center, farmers and fruit growers were extolled in the Fairfield press and their contributions were deemed essential to the war effort.

While some of California and Fairfield citizens were reaping the benefits of a wartime economy, the Japa-

nese American citizens of this state were not so fortunate. There were more than 93,000 Japanese Americans in California; 14,000 in Washington; 4,000 in Oregon, or a total of about 111,000 in the three coastal states. In the Fairfield-Suisun area there were estimated to be about 300. Immediately after the raid by Japan on Pearl Harbor, rumors that Japanese Americans aided their fatherland in this attack began to circulate among the citizens of California. To add fuel to the fire, Frank Knox, the Secretary of the Navy, said that "The Japanese consulate in Honolulu had been the center of a highly efficient professional espionage network." This type of reporting by a high government official led to hostilities toward the Japanese Americans living on the west coast, in California, and communities like Fairfield, Vacaville, and Vallejo.⁸

The War Relocation Authority was established within the Office for Emergency Management by executive order number 9066, on March 18, 1942. It was signed by President Franklin Roosevelt, and its purpose "...was to formulate and effectuate a program for the removal, relocation, maintenance, and supervision of persons excluded by orders of the Secretary of War or an appropriate military commander from designated military areas." The persons to which this order was directed were citizens of Japan and United States citizens of Japanese ancestry (frequently referred to as Nisei). Although enemy aliens of other countries were affected, and America was fighting both the Germans and Italians, most of the citizens removed were

the Japanese from the Pacific coast area under the jurisdiction of the commander of the Western Defense Command. This command established and maintained relocation centers to house evacuees and relocation offices to aid Japanese families in their relocation.⁹

The military authorities' argument was that the Japanese in California and other west coast states were living too close to airfields, Army installations and Navy bases and could sabotage the military operation. This was a dangerous situation and the military wanted the Japanese relocated, in spite of the fact that many of the Japanese were second generation Nisei and loyal American citizens.¹⁰

This relocation proved to be disastrous for the Japanese. Many had to sell their homes, land and business at a fraction of their value and in a short period of time. The property losses were estimated at \$365,000,000. Such items as radios, arms, and other suspicious-looking effects were confiscated from them. In Solano county there were approximately 1,000 alien and non-alien Japanese that were relocated to Turlock, California. They were charged with no crime. They were merely considered potential enemies by the Department of the Army, and no one rose to invoke the protection of the constitution on their behalf.¹¹

The deadline for their departure from Fairfield was 12:00 noon, Sunday, May 3, 1942. Billboards posted in the post office, train and bus stations notified the

Japanese citizens and the public about the deadline and relocation. In the first group leaving Fairfield were 30 students from Armijo High School, 8 from Crystal school, and two from Fairfield elementary school. To add insult to injury, the Solano Republican newspaper carried an advertisement on April 2, 1942, asking for farmers to take over the land and farms vacated by the Japanese. All the farmer had to do was to apply for the land at the United States Defense Authority War Board, located in the Solano County Title Insurance building in Fairfield. Many farmers were ready to move on to the land before the Japanese left.¹²

Nor were rural Japanese the only victims of the mixture of wartime hysteria and local greed. Jimmy and Namika Ikenaga in 1941 owned the Park Inn in Fairfield on U. S. Highway 40 which was reported to be the finest resort restaurant in Solano County. The Ikenagas were American born and had been local restaurateurs for over thirty years. In May 1942, Jimmy Ikenaga was interned in Fort Meade, South Dakota and his sister, Namika, was sent to Gila Bend, Arizona. By June 1942, the local Solano Republican reported that the Park Inn restaurant was now the property of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Dalkas, owners of the less prestigious Palace Grill in downtown Fairfield.¹³

Another land grab of a different sort in the Fairfield area resulted from the purchase of land by the United States government to construct a major military

base near Fairfield. The government purchased the land (over 1600 acres) at a cost of \$50 per acre from private land owners, even the county roads running through this land were purchased from Solano County. Because of wartime secrecy, the physical description of the air base was not shared with the Fairfield community. However, it was made public that the base would have runways, taxiways, hard-standing roadways and support facilities. The number of men involved in the construction was not disclosed, but jobs were plentiful and some of those working on the construction would live on the site. This in fact was the first real economic boom to the city of Fairfield. Government money was pouring into the area and jobs were greater than the local population could handle. As a result, new people and citizens came to live and work in Fairfield.¹⁴

On July 9, 1942, the Solano Republican reported that work on the air field was underway in the Scandia section, just four miles east of downtown Fairfield. It said that large bulldozers were leveling the north-south runways, while survey flags marked the east-west runways a quarter mile south of the first one. The construction of dwelling and office buildings for employees and troops to live and work was also reported by the newspaper. For the first time in its brief history, Fairfield citizens were able to find good paying employment close to home.¹⁵

The city continued to support the war effort. The concept of doing one's part for the war effort was stressed.

Fairfield's citizens had a genuine interest in actually making a contribution; others wanted simply to make their fellow citizens believe they were contributing. For example, on August 20, 1942, there was a rally to collect metal scrap on the farms and in the homes that could be used for the war effort. All that the citizens had to do was to bring the scrap into the Woodard's Chevrolet garage or telephone the Women's Motor Corps and have the scrap picked up. This junk drive collected more than 30 tons of scrap metal for defense. Throughout the war regular collections of scrap iron, tin cans, rags, fats, and oils were made. Schools, community organizations, and individual housewives played key roles in carrying out these efforts. In another effort, high school students took turns in working the tomato fields in the Fairfield area.¹⁶

Despite the elaborate organization to help win the war, the one influence in Fairfield that brought people face to face with the realities of war and stirred within them a genuine feeling of concern was their connection with relatives and friends in the armed forces. Almost every one in Fairfield had many relatives or close friends in the service. By early 1943, Fairfield learned of its first military casualty. Corporal James Simmer, a graduate of Armijo High School, was captured on Bataan and died in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Also, in July 1942, the Fairfield Lions Club undertook a project to compile and keep up to date a complete list of all

the men and women of this community serving with the army, navy, marine corps, aircorps and merchant marine. To do this, they called upon all parents and friends to assist in compiling the list.¹⁷

There were many lines of communication between the community and its sons and daughters in the armed forces; the most general of these was the newspaper. The Solano Republican had a weekly column called "Our Men and Women in Service." The column was of interest to everyone because it gave information as to where service people were stationed, who got promoted, or who was home on leave. In addition, many churches in the Fairfield area had newsletters distributed to both their members in the service and those at home. This kept the service man and woman in touch with his or her religious beliefs as well as information about the home front. The American Legion, Lions Club, and other organizations such as the American Red Cross on several occasions sent small gifts and letters to Fairfield service men and women.¹⁸

The war meant that there was a significant increase in military traffic passing through the city. Since U. S. Highway 40 passed through the center of Fairfield, it was necessary for the local citizens to be aware of procedures for dealing with military convoys and to follow certain rules designed for the protection of motorists as well as the Army. The rules said:

1. Don't break through army motor columns.
2. Don't pass and then try to cut in front

- because convoys are deceptively fast.
3. When you pass, don't cut into convoy lines.
 4. Obey the traffic police, both military and civilian.
 5. When you hear a siren or see a red light on an approaching vehicle, clear the center lane or intersection.

By publishing the above rules and distributing them to the community, Fairfield was able to maintain a fine traffic record as far as incidents with military convoys were concerned.¹⁹

In 1943, with the influx of hundreds of new workers into the Fairfield area to aid with the war effort, the City of Fairfield was forced to undergo many changes and was also faced with many complicated problems. Some of these changes and problems the city could not handle alone. One such problem was that of finding housing for the new civilian population that came to work on military bases, construction work, and other jobs connected with the war effort. The city officials soon realized that the new airfield nearing completion east of Fairfield would require housing for some of the soldiers and all of the civilian employees. They also realized that this new military installation would be like a small city located only four miles from the heart of Fairfield and Suisun City.²⁰

The new military airfield would have two runways (6000 feet and 7000 feet long) to accommodate large cargo planes. It would have large warehouse and administration buildings. There would be a steam plant large enough to heat a city the size of Fairfield, a sewer disposal plant

big enough for a city with a population of 10,000. The base would include a modern 350 bed hospital and a large fire station. Finding housing for the men and women who operated these facilities was a major problem for the Fairfield community, the government, and the various industries that sent people to work in Fairfield. Reaching a solution to the housing problem required the joint efforts of the military, industry and the local community working together.²¹

This community, military and industry relationship grew closer in other spheres. The military continually courted the media, and the press repaid the compliment with interest. The local newspapers publicized military activities fully, opened their columns to service spokesmen advocating defense measures, and frequently denounced those that opposed the activities of the military. The Fairfield Lions Club, American Legion, and other organizations supplemented the media communications network by inviting military speakers to speak at their meetings. This close relationship among the community, military and industry created a change in local politics. The military was now a partner in city planning efforts. Fairfield politicians found themselves planning ahead to meet the urgent needs of the military. One example involved efforts to get the Federal Housing Administration to allocate funds for the building of public housing in the Fairfield-Suisun area.²²

On May 13, 1943, the Solano Republican reported

that two large building projects would start construction in Fairfield. It said that seventy five FHA homes would be built on Fairfield and Suisun lots by the Leekins and Davis Construction Company, and that forty eight FHA public housing units built by the Lawrence Construction Company, would be constructed on the north edge of Fairfield. These houses, the paper stated, would relieve the housing congestion here and would make Fairfield a new city almost overnight.²⁴

The housing project built on the northern edge of the City of Fairfield and adjacent to the Sacramento Northern Railroad, was constructed for employees at the military airfield, Fairfield textile workers, Hunter's boat works in Suisun, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the Basic Vegetable Products Company in Vacaville. Also, on July 1, 1943, the Fairfield city council proposed that the National Housing Agency name the new housing project for defense "Waterman Park" in honor of Captain Waterman, the founder of Fairfield. This proposal was approved and the name "Waterman Park" was placed over the entrance to the new housing project. On March 30, 1944, an additional 100 housing units were approved by the FHA for Waterman's Park. The new housing project was like a small city. It was built on a plot of land outside the city limits of Fairfield and just north of Kentucky street.²⁵

With the new military airfield and the building of the new federal housing projects in the area, one could clearly see that the City of Fairfield would never again

be the quiet, peaceful little community that citizens had been accustomed to over the years. The influx of hundreds over night required a readjustment by all citizens in their way of life, whether they welcomed the change or not. The people of Fairfield accepted their responsibilities and played a key role in making the transition as smooth as possible. All of these changes came to Fairfield because the country was involved in war.²⁶

Among the group of newcomers were technical and managerial workers sent in to run the modern equipment and facilities at the airfield. Because of their social and educational background they came to Fairfield as good solid middle class citizens. They became active in the churches and organizations in the city. The ministers made strong efforts to bring these desirable newcomers to the community into their churches. In contrast, many Fairfield men left their old jobs, sometimes abandoning long seniority, to take advantage of the high wages and of the possibility of advancing from unskilled and semi-skilled jobs into the skilled crafts. Even Fairfield women left their jobs as maids, laundresses, and store clerks to work in the shipyard at Vallejo and at the new military airfield. The new military airfield and the willingness of everyone to help with the war effort had created in Fairfield for the first time a major shift in job occupations. For example, women advanced to jobs never before available to them, ethnics and racial groups raised the ceiling on their job

expectations, and unskilled workers learned new skills.²⁷

Finally, with the influx of people and the improved economy, the City of Fairfield tax rate remained unchanged in 1942. The city council decided to continue taxation at \$1.60 per \$100 valuation. Out of this \$1.60, \$1.00 went to the general fund, \$.08 for sewer bonds, and \$.52 went for city improvement bonds. By late 1945, the city slashed its tax rate to \$1.28. The general tax was \$1.00 and the bond retirement tax was \$.28. This was the lowest tax rate in the city's history.²⁸

In this chapter a closer look at Fairfield during World War II was undertaken. Fairfield citizens, like many other American citizens, were shocked at the surprise attack by the Japanese on our naval base at Pearl Harbor. Many citizens in Fairfield were willing to do whatever was necessary to support the war effort. Some of the citizens volunteered for the armed forces, while others did defense work in the factories and on the farms. The best paying jobs were in the shipyards in Vallejo and Richmond.

Since there were many jobs available and a shortage of manpower in the Fairfield area, many new people came to live and work here. They found available jobs but a shortage of living accommodations. While the economy was providing prosperity for some Californians and Fairfield citizens, other citizens were not so fortunate, especially the Japanese.

The Japanese citizens in the Fairfield-Suisun

area were forced to sell their property and personal possessions and to evacuate their homes. They were relocated in relocation camps throughout the central and western portions of the United States. Many of the farms that were evacuated by the Japanese were resettled by white farmers who were assigned the land by the Federal Government.

In addition to the land grab from the Japanese, there was a different type of land grabbing that took place in the purchasing of 1600 acres of land to build a military airfield near Fairfield by the Federal Government. The land to build this airfield was purchased for fifty dollars an acre by the United States Government.

In supporting the war effort there were Fairfield loved ones that were killed and injured while fighting for this country. Our men and women in the armed services were kept informed about news on the home front by letters and pamphlets printed by local churches and social organizations.

The influx of people and the availability of many jobs created a change in the social and economic status of the community and at the same time established the foundation for new growth and development. The new citizens coming to live and work in Fairfield were mainly middle class workers. These new citizens joined local churches and social clubs and made their presence felt on the political scene. The influx of people did not cause a change in the local tax base, but the influence of

the military in Fairfield planning and growth was firmly established. In the next chapter, the establishment of Travis Air Force Base and how it changed the face of Fairfield will be examined.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER III

¹David Lavender, The Story of California (Sacramento: California: State Department of Education, 1971, p. 288; Alan Jenkins, The Forties (New York: Universe Books, 1977), pp. 27-28; Ronald H. Limbaugh and Walter A. Payne, Vacaville: The Heritage of a California Community (Vacaville: Vacaville City Council, 1978), p. 267.

²Solano Republican, December 11, 1941; Walton Bean, California: An Interpretive History, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Company, 1973), p. 425; Joseph A. McGowan, History of the Sacramento Valley II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961), p. 312.

³Solano Republican, December 18, 1941, p. 1; Limbaugh, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

⁴Solano Republican, December 18, 1941; Bean, op. cit., pp. 426-427; W. H. Hutchison, California: Two Centuries of Man, Land, and Growth in the Golden State (Palo Alto, California, 1971), pp. 211-212.

⁵Bean, op. cit., p. 427; Solano Republican, May 13, 1942.

⁶Jack Goodman, While You Were Gone: A Report on Wartime Life in the United States (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 180; Solano Republican, March 15, 1945; Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 39-41, 137.

⁷Bean, op. cit., pp. 428-429; Solano Republican, July 2, 1942; "Food will win the war" Solano Republican, July 2, 1942.

⁸Kitty O'Neil, "Resident Recalls 1942 Relocation," Suisun Breeze, May 6, 1981; Bean, op. cit., pp. 433-434; Limbaugh, op. cit., p. 267.

⁹Federal Records of World War II, Vol. I, Civilian Agency: Washington D. C., 1950, (General Services Administration National Archives Record Center, San Bruno, California), p. 519; Maisie and Richard Conrat, "Executive Order 9066," California Historical Quarterly, L0313-314, September 1971.

¹⁰Andrew F. Rolle, California: A History (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1963), pp. 560-561.

¹¹Ibid., p. 560.

¹²Solano Republican, April 30, 1942, p. 1; "Farmers wanted, take over land, and farms vacated by Japanese, available now." Solano Republican, April 2, 1942.

¹³"Once popular Park Inn on Highway 40 Now the Property of Jim Dalkas." Solano Republican, June 24, 1942; "American Born Japanese Purchase Highway Site for New Restaurant." Ibid., August 1, 1940.

¹⁴McGowan, op. cit., p. 318; "Contract to Build Airport Near Fairfield Let Tuesday June 30, 1942." Solano Republican, July 2, 1942.

¹⁵Solano Republican, July 9, 1942, p. 1.

¹⁶"Junk Rally for Defense." Ibid., August 20, 1942; "More than Thirty Tons of Scrap Collected." Ibid., October 22, 1942.

¹⁷Ibid., July 29, 1943.; See also "Lions Endeavoring to Complete Roster." Solano Republican, July 23, 1942.

¹⁸"Nearly 400 Local Lads in the Service." Solano Republican, January 4, 1945, p. 1; Waterman Clipper, January 4, February 22, 1945.

¹⁹"Motorists Are Urged to Yield Right of Way to Military Convoys," Solano Republican, July 2, 1942.

²⁰"Problems of Civilian Housing Soon Facing Community." Solano Republican, March 25, 1943.

²¹Ibid.

²²"Local Committees, City Council, and Lions Club Approves Housing Projects Here, awaits Government Approval," Solano Republican, May 13, 1942; "Navy Commander Speaks to Lions Club, a speech on the close-up of military actions in the Pacific." Solano Republican, March 22, 1945.

²³"Housing Approved by City Council." Solano Republican, May 19, 1943, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid., July 22, 1943, p. 1.

²⁵"Captain Robert Waterman Honored." Solano Republican, July 1, 1943, p. 1.

²⁶Solano Republican, June 3, 1943; Bean, op. cit., p. 427.; McGowan, op. cit., pp. 318-322.

²⁷Jenkins, op. cit., p. 40; Rolle, op. cit., p. 463; "Fairfield Airfield Now Ragsdale Field." Solano Republican, June 3, 1943, p. 1.

²⁸"Tax Rate Here to Remain Unchanged." Solano Republican, September 3, 1942, p. 1; "City Slashes City Tax Rate." Solano Republican, August 9, 1945, p. 1.

CHAPTER IV

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE: FAIRFIELD'S CHANGING FACE

What was a few month's ago, rolling plains with short grass and roving sheep has thus been transformed into a teaming, moderning [sic], gigantic network of runways, hangers, barracks and hospitals - all for the national defense and war effort - and all right in Fairfield's back yard. Solano Republican, March 25, 1943.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Army's Fourth Air Force, charged with the aerial defense of the Pacific Coast, requested a new air base in the vicinity of Fairfield. Two thousand acres about six miles east of Fairfield in the Scandia area were purchased for fifty dollars an acre, and construction, authorized on April 22, 1942, was completed in September. The property for the airfield (now known as Travis Air Force Base) was acquired by the government a few months earlier from Frank Peterson real estate, Annie Larson estate, Carl Torp, Mary Silveria, and other land owners in the area.¹

The contract to build the airfield was awarded to the Frederickson and Watson and Watson Brothers Construction Company of Oakland, California, by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. After being awarded the contract, the company set up temporary offices in Woodard's Chevrolet garage on Texas street in Fairfield. Other contracts awarded were to the M. J. King Company of San Francisco for the construction of buildings, A. Teichert and Sons

for concrete runways, Pacific Gas and Electric Company for the construction of power lines (gas and electric) and an electric substation, Van Valkenberg Company for sewer lines, W. T. Drury Company for the construction of government owned power lines, and to the Russell and Brown Company for the construction of a 500,000 gallon concrete reservoir. In addition to these contractors, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers did the surveys for runways, hangars, and the layout of the airfield.²

The citizens of Fairfield began to ask "How soon will it be before the government officially takes over the operation of the new airfield?" The answer given by the government authorities was that the field would be ready as soon as it was leveled up between the runways, grass planted, and the United States flag was raised. One other answer was that you would know that the base was operational when you heard the first plane flying overhead to land at the new airfield. Other than information of this sort and the fact that the country was at war, most of the information about the base was classified.³

On May 17, 1943, the new airfield was named the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base (FSAAB), in accordance with the authority contained in the War Department memorandum number W95-3-43, dated February 8, 1943, and letter of instruction from the Commanding General, Air Transportation Command (ATC), dated January 2, 1943. This

was finalized by General Order number 6, dated May 17, 1943. The base was officially opened on June 1, 1943. Originally, the name Ragsdale Field was submitted for the name of the base, but officials settled on the Fairfield-Suisun name.⁴

The Army Air Transport Command (AATC), predecessor of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), was assigned to the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Field on May 25, 1943. The primary purpose of the base was to service planes enroute to the Pacific theater of war. In the first year of operation over two thousand aircraft were prepared for their trip overseas. The first military troops that came to the base consisted of 23 military policemen from Hickam Field in Hawaii. The 23rd Aircraft Ferrying Group arrived at the field on July 1, 1943, and on July 4, 1943, the first B-24 Liberator bomber landed at the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Field prior to continuing on overseas to the Pacific theater of operation. Other aircraft using the base were transport planes (C-24's, C-54's, C-47's), patrol planes (PB-4Y, PB-J1), observation planes (OA-10), and reconnaissance planes (RY-1). Almost overnight the Fairfield-Suisun area became the focal point of a world-wide military operation. The key military base in the Pacific theater of war was no longer Pearl Harbor, it had become the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base.⁵

The military was impressed with the airfield location because it was isolated at that time from population

centers and yet only fifty miles from the coast. The area is nearly fog free and is blessed by prevailing westerlies that pilots and navigators truly appreciate. It was an ideal location for an airfield.⁶

The first commanding officer of the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base was Major Arthur W. Stephenson (promoted to Lieutenant Colonel September 16, 1943). He said in a speech to city officials, that his most critical need was housing for the people he could not accomodate at the base. He also said that the base would employ more than 50 women as stenographers and other office help as soon as they could be located. In addition, he said that there was plenty of work for all types of male civilians, both trained and untrained. Major Stephenson kept a close relationship with the Fairfield city officials; and the city officials were more than grateful to him for the promise of jobs for the citizens of the Fairfield community.⁷

It was June 3, 1943, when Major Stephenson announced that the name of the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Field had been changed to Ragsdale Field. It was named after Lieutenant R. S. Ragsdale, a United States Army pilot, who met death while transferring 30 women and children from enemy infested New Guinea and after disposing of five of the 12 Japanese Zero fighter planes that had attacked him. Although Major Stephenson made the public announcement that the base's new name was Rags-

dale Field, the name was never officially changed. The War Department had a policy of not naming bases after personalities. As a compromise, the first street on the base was named Ragsdale.⁸

On January 28, 1944, the first enlisted Women Army Corps (WACS) troops arrived from Washington D. C. The WAC squadron was under the command of Lieutenant Audrey Hollenbeck. She was replaced by Lieutenant Elsie F. Hurley on March 17, 1944. All the WAC troops lived south of base headquarters in an area to themselves.⁹

WACS in the Air Transport Command (ATC) were used in dispatching offices, at information desks, and in process duty at aerial ports of embarkation. WAC clerks also kept stock records of the thousands of pieces of technical equipment. In contrast, publicity was given to the more unusual types of jobs for women such as flying airplanes and as crew members. This created the public impression that more women were employed in flying than was actually the case. In fact, relatively few WACS ever saw the inside of an airplane in the line of duty. Out of a total of 32,000 WACS assigned to the Army, only 20 were listed as "Air Crew Members" and there was only one WAC Crew Chief. Women sometimes made non-combat flights as radio operators. In addition, there were about 617 women in aircraft maintenance and 656 aviation specialists. However, since men were available to fill these skills, the women were trained to fill the clerical jobs.¹⁰

There were about 1100 black WACS serving with the

Army and they were employed in the same type of jobs as other WACS, but few black women were skilled in clerical and related fields. The black WACS served in segregated units and were organized into about 10 black units throughout the Army. There were no black WACS among the first group of WACS assigned to the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base.¹¹

On February 19, 1944, the first black soldiers arrived at the base. This group was the first Negro detachment in the Pacific wing of the Air Transport Command (ATC). The black troops were assigned to section D and under the command of Captain J. C. Cain until March 1943, when Captain W. E. Avery assumed command. Captain L. B. Huie took command of section D in August, 1944. All of the black troops' sections had white officers as commanders. The black troops lived one fourth mile east of base headquarters. They were used mainly as cooks, barbers and clerks. This was the first substantial number of black Americans to live in the Fairfield-Suisun area.¹²

Why did black troops fight for this country in segregated units? When the war started, blacks who volunteered for military service or were drafted, were segregated. They were welcome only in the Army and not at all in the Marine Corps. In spite of these obstacles, for the blacks, it was a special war. This was because the blacks saw Hitler as a racist, and Japan as a racist country fighting the Chinese and Philippines. The blacks were fighting racism in America and committed to stamping it out. In other

words, the blacks as well as the American Jews volunteered for active combat to fire as many bullets into racism as possible, in the hope that with the defeat of Hitler and Tojo, the ugliness of racism would be ended throughout the world.¹³

One incident that led to elimination of segregation in the armed forces was the Mare Island Mutiny Court Martial on September 14, 1944. It was on the evening of July 17, 1944, when a segregated unit of black sailors was assigned to load ammunition ships at Port Chicago. While loading the ship a massive explosion rocked the entire area and killed 320 men, more than 200 of whom were black sailors who had been loading the ammunition. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that the blast toll reached 377 dead and 1000 injured. When the surviving stevedores were reassembled at Mare Island, near Vallejo, and ordered to load another ammunition ship, over 328 black sailors refused, saying that they feared another blast. The Mare Island Mutiny Court Martial followed. This court martial focused national attention upon the racial problems existing in the military. Pressure from civil rights groups and the black press played a major role in helping the Navy learn a lesson on the ideological and moral inconsistencies of segregation, and that blacks would fight back against racism. Although racism existed at the military installation near Fairfield, there were no major incidents of racial conflicts in the Fairfield-Suisun area.¹⁴

Many new buildings appeared on the air base in 1944. For example, on April 1, a new post office opened, on April 15, a postal exchange (PX) opened, and the base chapel. In addition, buildings completed or planned were 19 administration buildings, a control tower, 4 quarter-master warehouses, 97 barracks, 4 aircraft warehouses, 9 mess halls, an officer's club, 4 post exchanges, 3 theaters, a gymnasium, 2 chapels, a swimming pool, a library, 6 day rooms, and an NCO club. The base itself had more people and more modern facilities than Fairfield.¹⁵

The citizens of Fairfield were pleased with the progress and the job opportunities that the new air base brought to the city and area. At least one Fairfielder expressed his pleasure in a public manner. The Solano Republican reported that Harry Miller, a local painter, was given a six month jail sentence for being drunk on the street and resisting an officer. He was to serve 90 days of his term, the balance being suspended for good behavior. The paper reported Miller as saying the reason he was celebrating in the street was the fact he had landed a good job at the new air base across the Rio Vista highway from where he lived.¹⁶

The large number of young males stationed at the base during the war had both a social and an economic impact on the Fairfield community. Far sighted citizens of Fairfield, such as those who had previously organized the Red Cross chapter, organized a branch of the United Service Organization (USO) to help relieve the social problems faced

by these young males. The USO was located on Texas street where every night men from the base gathered to dance with the pretty local hostesses, play games, read books, play musical instruments, and make new friends. Many troops were more adventurous in that they found entertainment in the bars, pool halls and gambling dens. Servicemen frequented the red light districts of Fairfield, Vacaville, Suisun, Vallejo, and Benicia. It was reported that Benicia had the best red light district. Prostitution was common in all of these cities during this period. The base hospital reported that in 1944 there were 22 white soldiers and 16 black soldiers who had contracted venereal disease.¹⁷

These social changes were the price that a small community like Fairfield had to pay for urban growth. Local business profits were at an all time high, and the population growth brought about better community planning and modernization. In spite of the shortages and inconveniences caused by the war emergency, the impact of the social changes and economic boom created by the troops from the military air base did more than anything else in making Fairfield a modern community. Many of the soldiers married local girls and returned to the area to live after their service days were over. Also, many came back to work on the base as civilians after they left the Army.¹⁸

The shortage of housing was the major problem facing the base commander and the surrounding communities.

Fairfield, Suisun, and Vacaville had an important relationship to the base. Base housing could accomodate only a fraction of the thousands of military personnel assigned to the base. In addition to the military people, there were hundreds of civilians who were also competing for housing in the surrounding area. To solve this housing shortage was a major preoccupation for the officials of the three cities as well as the county. In all three cities local residents shared their homes, including their garages and attics which were used as living quarters. Although much of this housing was substandard, many of the newcomers to the area had to accept what was available, and in many cases they were lucky to get any housing at all.¹⁹

The housing problem was somewhat relieved in Fairfield by the building of the Waterman Park housing units. In Vacaville, the building of Vaca Valley Acres, played a similar role. Both of these projects were supported by the Federal Housing Authority. Public housing was also built in Suisun City.²⁰

As soon as these public housing projects were completed, they were immediately occupied because of the long list of names on the housing waiting list. This forced Col. Stephenson, the commanding officer at the air base, to solicit rooms in Fairfield for his troops. He asked the local residents to rent a room to military personnel. He said that agreements would be signed that would give full protection to the landlords. It was called a share-your-

home campaign. This was necessary since the base's population and mission was expanding faster than the housing could accomodate. For example, a fleet of huge Skymaster transport planes had been assigned to the base, which also brought additional pilots, navigators, flight engineers, and their families to the Fairfield area. The commander had to make room for them.²¹

In January, 1943, the mission of the air base changed. In the past the base was used to process bombers and their crews for making the long over water hop (7,000 miles) into the Pacific war zone. The mission changed from that of an aircraft ferrying operation to that of flying regularly scheduled flights into the Pacific combat zone with high priority passengers, cargo, and mail. This new mission meant bigger aircraft and longer runways. The base had to undergo a \$3,500,000 building and expansion program. This was done to accomodate the C-54 Skymaster cargo planes.²²

A few months after the \$3,500,000 building and expansion program was completed, a further \$20,000,000 expansion project for the base was planned. This included building a new passenger terminal, a hospital to accomodate 650 beds, a large freight terminal, a four mile long runway, a new housing project to provide for 1000 civilians, and a pipe line from the Suisun channel to the base for the purpose of providing fuel to the base aircraft. This was a major expansion program which meant that over a period of about three months more than \$23,795,000 was

spent on the base. It led citizens of Fairfield to speculate that the airfield would eventually become a permanent military installation. In fact, it was California Congressman Leroy Johnson who said that the base would become a permanent base. He also said that there would be no cut backs on the expansion of the base. The only changes to expect would be to increase the program.²³

The progress of the war in Europe changed the role of the Fairfield-Suisun air base. On Tuesday, May 8, 1945, the war ended in Europe which meant that more fighting troops would be sent into the Pacific to fight the Japanese. This in turn led to an increase in the number of men and materials that were processed through the local air base.²⁴

In Fairfield, V-E Day was quiet. The Solano Republican reported that only silent joy marked the Nazi surrender; business places in Fairfield remained open, only the bars closed. It said that many local citizens were up at six o'clock to hear President Harry Truman announce that the European war had ended. In Fairfield and at the air base there was no sounding of sirens; no shouting of any nature as people went about their daily tasks. Town leaders were saying too bad all the boys can't come home for good.²⁵

Fairfield's Mayor John E. Freitas in a message to the citizens, said that "The city rejoiced with full hearts because of the total victory by the allies over the Nazi tyrants of Europe." He also said "We especially re-

joice that millions of our finest lads have been liberated from the valley of death."²⁶

With the war in Europe over, the need for housing continued in the Fairfield-Suisun area. On May 17, 1945, the United States Public Housing Authority awarded a contract to the Claude T. Lindsay Company of San Francisco to build 156 new dwelling units at the Waterman Park in Fairfield, and 44 units in Vacaville. The cost of this contract was \$478,347. Also during the same period, it was announced that some building materials would be released for the building of private homes in Fairfield. After materials became available, many new homes were built and sold for approximately \$7,000. Some of these units rented for about \$60 per month.²⁷

Waterman Park was like a small city adjacent to the city of Fairfield (see Appendix B). Living there were many government employees as well as many military families assigned to the air base. There was a Waterman Park cafe restaurant that served regular dinners every day. The area had its own theater, shopping center, beauty shops, and a weekly newspaper, the Waterman Clipper. The newspaper kept the occupants and the Fairfield community informed about the families living there and some of the social events going on in the Waterman Park housing area. One favorite article printed each week in the newspaper was entitled "Peeping Through the Keyhole," an article about the family life at Waterman Park.²⁸

Living at Waterman Park were over 200 families from

the Consairways Division of the Vultee Aircraft Corporation, San Diego. They began moving into the area in December 1943. General William O. Ryan, the Pacific Wing Commander, forced Consairways to move its major aircraft maintenance operations from San Diego to the Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Field. General Ryan wanted an airline over the Pacific that would handle cargo, passengers, and mail. It was the Consairways maintenance workers that kept these airplanes flying.²⁹

Everyone was not that pleased with the Waterman Park housing project. For example, James H. Fisher, the Public Relations Director for farm workers, wanted housing for local farm workers similar to the public housing available for government workers. He felt that agriculture was just as important to the war effort as the maintenance of aircraft. His request for housing for agriculture workers was not approved by the government.³⁰

August 14, 1945, was a day to celebrate in Fairfield and at the air base. This was V-J Day, the day that the fighting stopped with Japan. The war was over and the allies were again victorious. Peace on earth at last came to the world. The war was over in both Japan and Europe. The whole community joined in jubilation. Churches were opened for special services of thanksgiving. Many local citizens danced and shouted in the streets of Fairfield, while the fire sirens, fire equipment, and loud horns made noise and heralded President Truman's declaration of peace. Workers from the packing sheds of Suisun Valley

flocked to the town to celebrate. The air base went on a limited shift and many troops came to town to join in the celebration. All the bars in Fairfield closed within minutes after hearing the announcement, as a result, the town was more or less quiet during the night. The mayor declared Wednesday a holiday, and the grocery stores did a booming business in selling groceries to those who came to town.³¹

The end of the war meant the end of rationing. As soon as gasoline rationing ended for the first time in almost four years, the streets of Fairfield were filled with local automobile traffic. Also, at times it looked as if the town had been deserted since so many people were on the road going someplace in their automobiles. The headlines in the Solano Republican on Thursday, July 16, 1945, expressed the feeling of the citizens of Fairfield about the war with Japan. The headlines said in big four inch letters the following:³²

"LAST RAYS OF THE RISING SUN: PEACE ON EARTH
COMES AT LAST."

Fairfield in 1945 was no longer the small village of 1312 people and with cattle and sheep grazing in back yards. The town had been turned around; there were people living in Fairfield from all over the world and of all races and nationalities. There were imported professional people such as doctors, engineers, scientists, and lawyers, who came to support the war effort and ended up living in the Fairfield area as citizens. In addition to the pro-

fessionals, there were skilled and the unskilled workers that stayed here to live and work. More importantly, by late 1945, it was obvious that the military based war time economy was to continue after the end of hostilities. The Air Corps officials announced that the expansion of the air base would continue and that it was now a permanent installation. The government now had a new mission and that was the occupation of Japan. To support this mission, the air base at Fairfield played a key role. As long as the United States was a power in the Pacific, the economy of the Fairfield-Suisun area would remain sound. Fairfield would not become a ghost town like many other wartime communities, its growth and development was just beginning.³³

Other Changes to Fairfield's Face

There were other changes that occurred during the war that brought about new attitudes and feelings among the citizens of Fairfield. One such change was the signing of executive order 9423 by President Roosevelt on February 16, 1944. This order transferred the War Relocation Authority (WRA) from military control to the Department of Interior. On December 17, 1944, the War Department announced the revocation (effective on January 2, 1945) of the mass exclusion orders which had been in effect against people of Japanese descent since the spring of 1942. The War Relocation Authority began to release the Japanese and closed out its field offices and relo-

cation centers. This action by the government did not set too well with some citizens of Fairfield.³⁴

David Weir, the editor of the Solano Republican, wrote in an editorial on January 4, 1945, "The Japanese have returned, as predicted in this and many other California newspapers, and that as soon as the national elections were over the authorities would release interned Japs." Weir also noted that "several Japanese American citizens have already returned to Suisun Valley and, in some instances, have been greeted cordially, warmly, and even enthusiastically, especially by those with no sons in the service." Weir reported that the Japanese would not be accepted with the same friendly equality that they had received before Pearl Harbor. He said that "there would be no violence, because the people in Fairfield were good citizens and accepted authority quietly, even though they may not approve the return of the Japanese here, especially during wartime."³⁵

Nearly every social and political organization in Fairfield passed resolutions opposing the return of the Japanese. For example, the American Legion on August 19, 1943, passed a resolution to keep all "Japs" away. On November 25, 1943, a resolution was adopted by the Fairfield City Council to bar all Japanese from Fairfield and the west coast. The Fairfield Lions Club adopted a similar resolution. The Solano Republican printed an article entitled "Japs Not Wanted In Solano County Jails" on February 24, 1944. The City of Vacaville announced

that they wanted no "Japs." The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), in its 23rd state convention in San Francisco, insisted on a California forever freed from the menace of an alien Japanese civilization within its borders. The VFW also wanted Japanese exclusion as well as ultimate expulsion. Fairfield's Congressman, Leroy Johnson, introduced a bill in Congress to remove Japanese aliens after the war. The bill wanted all Japanese aliens deported, and all Japanese American citizens who have been found to be disloyal or gave comfort and aid to the enemy deported. In Vacaville, more than fifteen hundred local residents signed a petition vowing not to sell, lease, rent, or hire any person of Japanese ancestry.³⁶

The people that these resolutions were directed against were not only Japanese American citizens, they were also citizens of the City of Fairfield, some of whom were locally born and could not speak the Japanese language. They were Fairfield citizens returning from relocation camps (that some called concentration camps) in which many of them had little or no knowledge of the reason why they were sent there. When told by white Americans to go back to Japan, many Japanese replied to the fact that "How can we go back to Japan when we have never been there."³⁷

One Fairfield Japanese American citizen said that life in the relocation camps was like life in a concentration camp. The buildings were of the temporary

barracks type constructed to house soldiers in dormitory style. There was no cooking or plumbing facilities in these barracks. In each block there was a building that had showers, latrine, and laundry facilities. The centers were located in largely desert or in out of the way places like wastelands. The camps were surrounded with woven-wire and barbed wire fences, with watch towers for armed guards. The population of each camp had a range of from 7,000 to 20,000 Japanese. The average age of the evacuees were between 10 and 30 years of age, with a large contingent of teenagers.³⁸

Each camp had the problems of feeding the total population, community government, internal security, medical care, education, merchandising and community services, religious services, and recreation. For example, in education, schools through the high school level were established in all relocation centers. Teacher qualifications, curriculum content, and methods of instruction were developed in close consultation with state educational authorities and in line with the recognized standards of the state in which each center was located. All centers had community newspapers, published in both English and Japanese. The newspapers were printed and managed by the community enterprise association. Many Japanese died while in camp and were buried in the camp's cemetery. Religious services were provided for both Christians and Buddhists, and the evacuees were free to worship as they pleased. These were some of the conditions

and lifestyle in which Japanese Americans or Fairfield citizens were leaving behind. Some were returning to the Fairfield-Suisun area to get a new start in life. Yet, there were some Fairfield leaders and citizens who did not want them back.³⁹

In spite of the opposition to the return of the Japanese to the Fairfield-Suisun Valley area, many families did return. There were more than 250 Suisun Valley Japanese residents sent to Gila River Camp, Arizona, in the months following the attack on Pearl Harbor. One of those sent was Tom Ichikawa, a lifelong Suisun-Fairfield area resident. In an article in the Suisun Breeze newspaper, Ichikawa said that approximately 80 percent of those locked up during the war were American citizens. He said that they were locked up because their skin was yellow. They were placed in camps surrounded by barbed wire fences and guarded by military police, armed with machine guns. After spending a year in a concentration camp, the United States Army allowed him to enlist and he served with military intelligence as an interpreter. Ichikawa said that the Nisei soldiers were credited with shortening the war by three years since they were the eyes and ears for General Douglas MacArthur.⁴⁰

World War II left many scars on the memory of the Fairfield-Suisun Valley residents. There were over 400 men and women from Fairfield that served in the armed forces during the war. Of the 400 men and women in the war, 18 died, one was a prisoner of war, and one was

missing in action. By contrast, the war brought about a better economic life and caused a modification of the area's social life. The banks did a booming business near the end of the war. For example, the Solano County Bank had total assets of \$2,002,705.62 and the First National Bank of Fairfield had total assets of \$2,684,568.76. In five years bank assets had tripled. These Fairfield banks had the money available to lend to its citizens for the start of major post war construction programs. In 1945, the Fairfield City Council made plans for an expansion program to include a new city hall, fire station, and a water storage reservior. The city also slashed the city tax from \$1.32 to \$1.28. The general tax received \$1.00 and the bond tax received \$.28. This was the lowest tax rate in the city's history. With a sound economy and available employment the Fairfield area became an attraction for the new comer to the State of California.⁴¹

In 1945 after the war was over, some business and companies left the area. The Consairways Division of the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation returned to San Diego. It had employed the 200 people living in Waterman Park in Fairfield. In an expression of appreciation to the community of Fairfield, the company had the following letter printed in the local newspaper:

Our war job is finished. The men and women of Consairway now return to their homes and peace time pursuits. In parting, we wish to express our gratitude to you, the citizens of this

community, for your warm hearted and generous hospitality which has, to no small extent, contributed to the success of our mission.

This letter sums up the feelings that most companies and businesses enjoyed while living and working in the Fairfield area during the war.⁴²

In summary, the establishment of Travis Air Force Base brought about many changes to the Fairfield Area. The new airfield meant many new jobs in both the construction of the base and the operation of the base's facilities. The mission of the new airfield gave a national and international level of importance to the Fairfield area. Coming to Fairfield was an almost new population consisting of all races and nationalities. One major problem created for the local area was the task of finding decent living facilities for the new arrivals. This forced the base commander to make a special plea to the citizens of Fairfield to share their homes and rooms to the incoming citizens. In addition, the Federal Housing Authority began to build several housing projects throughout the Fairfield area to help solve the housing shortage.

The changing of the base's mission in 1945 meant that the installation would become a permanent facility. This made the base a source of continued employment for the Fairfield residents. Another change that helped change the face of Fairfield was the return of the Japanese from relocation camps. Many Fairfield citizens did not want the Japanese to return. After a brief period of

time they overcame their prejudices and were more tolerant of the Japanese.

In spite of the influx of new people and change in the economic and social levels of the community, Fairfield was still able to slash the local tax rate. In fact, in 1945, the war was over and the foundation had been established, Fairfield with its location, good transportation, airfield and rich agricultural land was now ripe for growth and development.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER IV

¹"Contract To Build Airport Near Fairfield Let Thursday, June 30, 1942." Solano Republican, July 2, 1942; "Air operations within the western defense zone were directed by the Fourth Air Force through its subordinate interceptor and bomber commands." Westly Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, The Army Air Force In World War II, vol. 1, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 295-296; Joseph A. McGowan, History of the Sacramento Valley, II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1961), p. 318.

²"Construction Companies at the Airfield." Solano Republican, March 25, 1943.

³Ibid., March 25, 1943, p. 1.

⁴"History of Travis Air Force Base: Microfilm Printout." (in Travis Air Force Base Library, Fairfield, California), 1942-1944, p. 11. Hereafter this collection is cited as Travis AFB papers.

⁵"Press tour of construction and improvement program at the Air Transport Command's Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base, Friday December 8, 1944." (Op. cit., Travis AFB, papers), p. 1; Craven, op. cit., pp. 362-363; "Type of Aircraft Flying From FSAB, 1943-1944." (Travis AFB, papers, op. cit.), p. 95.

⁶"The Fairfield area has a mild, temperate climate all during the year. It is generally a few degrees cooler in the Vallejo and Benicia areas which are located on the San Pablo Bay and Carquinez Strait. A prevailing wind through the Golden Gate and across the bay system helps temper the climate. The average mean daily temperature in Fairfield is 60.1 degrees. The fog from the ocean is generally a high fog blanketing and cooling the bay area including Vallejo and Benicia, however, it seldom extends beyond the ridge of hills into the Fairfield area." (Travis AFB, papers, op. cit.), p. 1.1.4.

⁷Solano Republican, June 3, 1943, p. 1.

⁸Ibid.; Travis AFB, papers, op. cit., p. 12.

⁹"First enlisted WACS arrive from Washington, D. C." (Travis AFB, papers, op. cit.), p. 14.

¹⁰Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, The Army Air Force In World War II, vol. 7 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 518.

- ¹¹Ibid., p. 519.
- ¹²Travis AFB, papers, p. 22.
- ¹³Donald I. Rogers, Since You Went Away (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1973), pp. 219-220; Charles Wollenberg, "Blacks Vs. Navy Blue: The Mare Island Mutiny Court Martial," California History, LVIII, (Spring, 1979), p. 62.
- ¹⁴Wollenberg, op. cit., pp. 65-66.
- ¹⁵Travis AFB, papers, pp. 13-14.
- ¹⁶Solano Republican, May 20, 1943, p. 1.
- ¹⁷"Local USO council swings into action," Ibid., September 10, 1942; Travis AFB, papers, pp. 54-55.
- ¹⁸"Problems of Civilian Housing Soon Facing the Community," Solano Republican, March 25, 1943, p. 1.
- ¹⁹"Share Your Home Campaign." Ibid., March 1, 1945; Ronald H. Limbaugh and Walter A. Payne, Vacaville: The Heritage of A California Community (Vacaville: Vacaville City Council, 1978), p. 276.
- ²⁰Limbaugh, op. cit., p. 277; "Two Large Building Projects to Start Here Next Week," Solano Republican, July 22, 1943.
- ²¹"Colonel Stephenson Solicits Rooms in Fairfield," Ibid., February 8, 1945, p. 1; see also "Cargo planes to land at base here," Ibid., January 1, 1943; March 1, 1945.
- ²²Ibid., January 11, 1943; Craven, op. cit., pp. 182-183; "New Expansion at Base to Accomodate the C-54 Skymaster," Solano Republican, June 14, 1945.
- ²³Ibid., July 12, 1945; "Base Will Become One of the West Coast Nerve Centers," Ibid., August 23, 1945.
- ²⁴Ibid., May 13, 1945.
- ²⁵"V-E Day Quiet in Fairfield," Ibid., May 10, 1945.
- ²⁶"Mayor's Message," Ibid., May 10, 1945.
- ²⁷Ibid., May 17, 1945; see also "New Homes to be Built in Fairfield," June 7, 1945.

28 "Waterman Clipper was published weekly by the Waterman Park Council, with Bonnie Williams as the Editor." Waterman Clipper, February 22, 1945; see also "Peeping Through the Keyhole." Ibid., February 22, 1945; "Waterman Park Restaurant Serves Regular Dinners Every Day." Solano Republican, January 4, 1945.

29 Craven, op. cit., p. 182; "Waterman Housing Addition Becoming A City." Solano Republican, December 9, 1943; "Consairways Decides to Stay in Fairfield." Ibid., August 2, 1945.

30 "James H. Fisher wants public housing for farm workers." Solano Republican, August 9, 1945.

31 "Last Rays of the Rising Sun: Peace On Earth Comes At Last." Solano Republican, July 16, 1945; For President Truman's speech on the declaration of peace, see also, Harry S. Truman, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Year of Decisions, vol. I (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), pp. 438-440.

32 "Gas Rationing Ends." Solano Republican, July 16, 1945; Alan Jenkins, The Forties, (New York: Universe Books, 1977), pp. 137-139.

33 Truman, op. cit., p. 457; "After the war many pilots and airplanes were used in agricultural aviation." Joseph A. McGowan, History of the Sacramento Valley, vol. II (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1961), p. 250.

34 Dillon S. Myer, Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority During World War II (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1971), pp. xxviii, xxix, 277; "Opening gun to bar Japanese from west coast-resolutions have been adopted by the Fairfield City council and Lions club." Solano Republican, November 25, 1943.

35 Solano Republican, January 4, 1945.

36 Ibid., August 12, 19, July 1, 1943; Limbaugh, op. cit., p. 279.

37 Suisun Breeze, May 6, 1981, p. 9; Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of the Japanese Americans During World War II (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 355.

38 Myer, op. cit., pp. 32-34.

39 Myer, op. cit., p. 33; Girdner, op. cit., pp. 274-275.

⁴⁰ "Resident Recalls 1942 Relocation." Suisun Breeze, May 6, 1961, p. 9; See also, Myer, op. cit., pp. 32, 33-58.

⁴¹ "Over 400 Fairfield Lads Went to War." Solano Republican, July 16, 1945, p. 1; "Solano County and The First National Bank Total Asset." Ibid., January 11, 1945; "City Slashes City Tax Rate." Ibid., August 9, 1945.

⁴² Ibid., December 5, 1945.

CONCLUSION

The foundation for building the Fairfield-Suisun area into a modern metropolitan urban community began during World War II. Fairfield, California is no longer a wide spot in the road. The catalyst that stimulated the economy of the area was the building of the military air base in the city's back yard. The pouring of money and materials into the area by the government created the proper atmosphere for growth and development.

The military installation meant that the future of Fairfield would be tied to continued funding from the federal government. The economic base of the community's prosperity had in a few short years shifted from a service center for the surrounding agricultural areas to dependency on a military installation. What had once been a sleepy market town, now was a cog in a vast military machine. Where once community concerns centered on local sources of wealth, Fairfield's prosperity after the war became involved in national and international events. Decisions affecting the future of the city were now made increasingly in Washington and were effected by the new role of the United States as a world power.

Adding to the economic growth of the area was the decision by the Department of Defense to make the air base a permanent installation. After the war was over, the government announced that there would be no cut-back

on the expansion of the base. At the end of the war there were more than 5000 workers employed at the military installation. By contrast, in 1940, the entire population of the city of Fairfield was only 1312.

Furthermore, the war and the period since the war had brought a new urban orientated population to Fairfield. The population created strains on city services, and equally important, it affected the social structure of the community. The small, somewhat in-bred, population in 1940 of native born Fairfielders had to accomodate people from the outside whose loyalty to Fairfield was less than that of the older community. What is remarkable from the perspective of 1982, is how well the community adjusted to changes since 1940. Perhaps adjustment was made easier by a leadership that was flexible and maintained its status and power in spite of changes. Perhaps also changes brought about by military installations are more structured than changes that occur as a result of rapid industrial and commercial growth. Fairfield since 1945 has been increasingly on the outer edge of the Bay Area's regional development and shared in the region's expansion. To make a comparison, one need only to look at the nearby community of Madison, California, which has no military installation and is outside of the Bay region. Madison is perhaps a mirror image of what Fairfield might have been; a small service town with a slow rate of growth.

This, of course, does not assume that Fairfield is "better" or "worse" as a result of the wartime and post-war transformation. There are middle aged and elderly citizens of Fairfield who look back on the "good old days" of the small town, and who resent the noise of planes, and traffic on I-80, but they are blinded by a romantic nostalgia. Fairfield is different now from the city of 1940, and the reason rests almost exclusively upon the development of the vast air base on the edge of the city.

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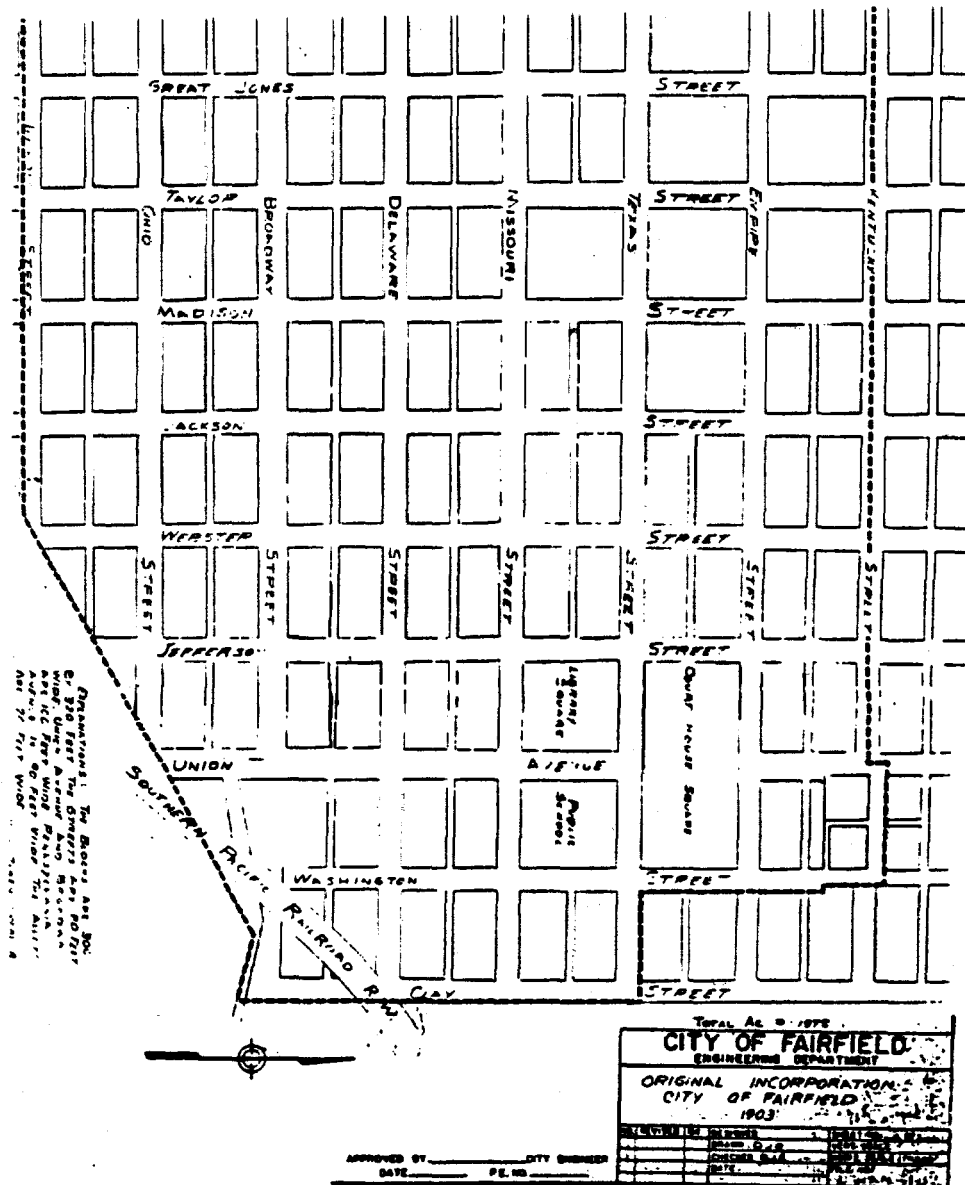
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APPENDIX A

Map, City of Fairfield - Original Incorporation, 1903



APPENDIX B

Map, City of Fairfield - Waterman Park Annexation, 1946

